

Myths & Legends of the **Vikings**



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Text by John Lindow

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Enlarged Viking silver coins of about 900 A.D.



Myths & Legends of the Vikings

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illustrated from the monuments of ancient Nordic art

In 793 the monk Alcuin, then in the service of Charlemagne, wrote in horror to Aethalstan, the king of Northumbria. "Never before has such terror appeared in Britain as we have now suffered from a pagan race, nor was it thought that such an inroad could be made from the sea. Behold, the church of Saint Cuthbert spattered with the blood of God's priests, bereft of its ornaments; a place more holy than all in Britain is given as booty to pagan peoples." Alcuin was referring to the sack of the monastery at Lindisfarne. Norwegian warriors, travelling in swift ships, had overcome the small monastic community, killed some priests, burned the monastery and taken what they wished. That was the first recorded Viking raid. For almost three centuries the pattern continued. During this period the view of the outside world remained fairly constant. "Deliver us, O Lord, from the fury of the Norsemen," ran one common prayer. From Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, the routes of plunder and trade stretched to the east, the south, and the west. As a result of this expansion, Iceland and Greenland were settled, and explorers reached North America in the late tenth century.

At home the Scandinavians lived more or less quietly as farmers. There were many small kingdoms, and not many men can have made warfare their primary occupation. Few written records have survived, and what we know of daily life is provided mostly through archaeological finds. Were it not for a lucky series of circumstances, we would know little indeed concerning Norse stories of gods and heroes.

Myths and legends were told regularly throughout Scandinavia. They were passed from generation to generation, but almost never with the aid of writing. For some reason however, they were written down in Iceland during



From a stone from Tjängvide, Alskog, Gotland, 8th century A.D. Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

the thirteenth century. This was long after the Viking period had ended and Iceland had converted to Christianity, so it is particularly remarkable that the pagan mythology was still known. The two most important books are now both called *Edda*, a word whose exact meaning is unknown.

One *edda* was written by a man named Snorri Sturluson, who was a statesman and a poet. His book, a textbook on the art of poetry, includes a long account of mythology. It is in the form of a series of questions put by a semi-legendary king called Gylfi. His questions are answered by wizards called High, Just-as-High, and Third. The answers recount many of the most important myths.

The other *edda* is called the *Poetic Edda*, because it is a collection of poems. About half deal with the gods, and half with the great heroes. The poems are all anonymous and originated in widely differing times and places. Together, however, they offer a fairly coherent picture, one that complements Snorri's work well. In this account of the Norse gods and heroes, I have mainly followed Snorri and the *Poetic Edda*, filling in from other prose and poetic sources when necessary.

The creation of the world was, according to the Norsemen, a complicated process. In the beginning there was nothing, only a yawning chasm called Ginnungagap. Gradually two worlds grew up on either side of the chasm. One was called Niflheim (the dark world); it was cold and harsh. To the south lay Muspell, a world of heat and light. It is guarded by Surt, armed with a flaming sword, which he will wield against the gods when the end of the world comes. The ice and cold of Niflheim met the warmth and light of Muspell within Ginnungagap, and at the point where they met, life was formed. The first creature was a giant called Ymir. From him come all the giants, evil creatures utterly opposed to the gods and all they stand for. Ymir



From the Gundestrup
Cauldron, National-
museet, Copenhagen
c. 1st century B.C.

High, Just-as-High, and Third respond
to the questions of Gylfi (disguised as Gangleri)

Universitetsbiblioteket, Uppsala, MS DG 11



was nourished by a cow, Audhumbla, formed from melted frost. She licked salty blocks of ice, and a human shape began to appear. After three days a man was formed. His name was Buri. He had a son called Bor, who in turn had several sons, one of whom was Odin, the foremost of the gods.

So gods and giants were linked from the beginning by the cow who fed Ymir and formed Buri. The doom of the gods was also present, in the person of Surt. Still, the world itself had not been formed. That happened in the following way. The sons of Bor killed the giant Ymir, and from his body they fashioned the various parts of the world: from his blood the sea, from his flesh the earth, from his bones the mountains, from his teeth and jaws rocks and pebbles. They made the sky from his skull, from his brain the clouds, and took sparks from Muspell to light up the sky. The earth they made in the form of a circle, entirely surrounded by an impassable sea. To the giants they allotted an area near the beach. Then they built a stronghold called Midgard (middle enclosure) out of Ymir's eyebrows, for protection against the giants. Here human beings would dwell.

Man was also created by the sons of Bor. They took two trees and gave them breath and life, mind and mobility, appearance, speech, hearing and sight. The trees became the first man and woman. Their names were Ask and Embla, which may mean ash-tree and elm-tree. Thus men and their world were created by the gods. In the great struggle between the gods and the giants, men are on the side of the gods.

Regarded symbolically, it is obvious that the gods represent order and good, and the giants chaos and evil. In their own lives men might call on various gods when necessary.



Enlarged from a helmet plate from Vendel grave 14



From the Cammin casket, destroyed during World War II

Each god probably had a special function and was called upon in certain situations, although people may have had favorites. For example, a man known as Helgi the Lean, although he had become a Christian, still worshipped Thor when at sea or at other difficult moments, for he felt that Thor was the most important god. Certain gods were obviously more popular in certain places or at certain times. Even so, it is possible to sketch an overall picture of the various gods within the religion of the Vikings.

Foremost of the gods was Odin, the son of Bor, who took part in the creation. He had only one eye, having given up the other as a pledge to obtain divine wisdom. He was, indeed, the wisest of the gods, but his wisdom was not of a very practical sort. He was a master of magic and could see into the past and future. He knew many magic songs and was the divine patron of poetry. He was a god of war and, not surprisingly, of the dead, particularly those who died in battle. Odin himself apparently underwent a kind of death, for he was hung for nine nights from a windswept tree. At that time he was,



ODIN* the one-eyed,
from a beam in the
nave in the stave
church at Heggen,
Modum, Norway.

* Recognizing the subjects of ancient art can be difficult sometimes. The captions under some of the pictures that follow are often only educated guesses.

according to one poem, "wounded by a spear and given to Odin, myself given to myself." After his ordeal he understood runes (the letters of the earliest Scandinavian writing system) and some magic songs. The spear remained his favorite weapon, and men killed by spears or hanging were special to him. Human sacrifices were apparently directed to him.

Odin's connection with the dead is clearly seen in the name of his hall, Valholl, and in the name of the women who serve him there, the *Valkyries*. *Valholl* means literally "hall of the slain," and *Valkyrja*, the Old Norse word for a Valkyrie, means "chooser of the slain." It was said that Odin sent the Valkyries to each battle to "choose the dead" and thus determine victory. All those who fell in battle came then to Valholl, where the Valkyries served them with drink. One poem names some of them:



VALKYRIES:
on a gold drinking
horn (second row)
which was stolen from
the Danish Royal Collection
years ago, and an enlarged silver-
and-gilt pendant; *Statens Historiska Museum*



Hrith and Mist, Hildr and Thrud,
Skeggjold and Skogul, Goll and Geirahod;
I wish that Hlokk and Herfjotur would bring the horn to me;
Randgrid and Radgrid and Reginleif;
They'd bring ale to Odin's fallen warriors.

Although originally Valholl may just have referred to a grave mound, by the end of the Viking period it had come to be regarded as a splendid hall. According to one source it had six hundred forty doors, through each of which nine hundred sixty dead warriors could ride. Each day the dead

warriors feasted on a boar, which the next day was whole and ready to be cooked again. A goat called Heidrun provides enough mead for all to drink their fill. The warriors pass their time in battle, but afterwards all are reconciled. Although these remarkable conceptions of the world of the dead may not have been shared by all members of early Scandinavian society, they must have appealed strongly to warriors, particularly before they went into battle.



Warriors with boar crested helmets, from a die from Torslunda, Sweden; 5th century A. D. *Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm*



SLEIPNIR, from a stone from Tjängvide, Alskog, Gotland, 8th century A.D. *Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm*

Odin's horse, Sleipnir, was said to be the finest of horses. With its eight legs it must have been very swift. It has been suggested that the eight-legged horse may represent four men carrying a coffin, another association between Odin and the dead.

According to one myth Odin once decided to test his wisdom against a giant named Vafthrudnir. Vafthrudnir was the wisest of all the giants. Calling himself Gagnrad, Odin journeyed to Vafthrudnir's hall. Vafthrudnir put four fairly simple questions to Odin, each of them concerned with the structure of the universe. The first two concerned day and night, the second two the name of the river dividing the gods' land from giantland and the name of the battlefield where the gods and the forces of evil will meet in the last battle. After Odin easily answered these questions, the giant agreed to answer Odin's question. The loser in the contest of wisdom would lose his head. Odin began with a series of twelve questions similar to those Vafthrudnir had asked him. They concerned such matters as the names of certain parts of the universe and its creation long ago. After the giant had answered these questions, Odin switched to the future. How is the world to end? Odin asked a series of questions about the Ragnarok, the last battle between gods and all the forces of evil, and Vafthrudnir answered them without difficulty. Finally Odin put his last question: what did Odin whisper into the ear of his dead son Baldr, when Baldr lay on the funeral pyre? This the giant could not answer. He recognized that he had been contesting in wisdom with Odin. Odin was the wiser, and Vafthrudnir would have to give up his head.

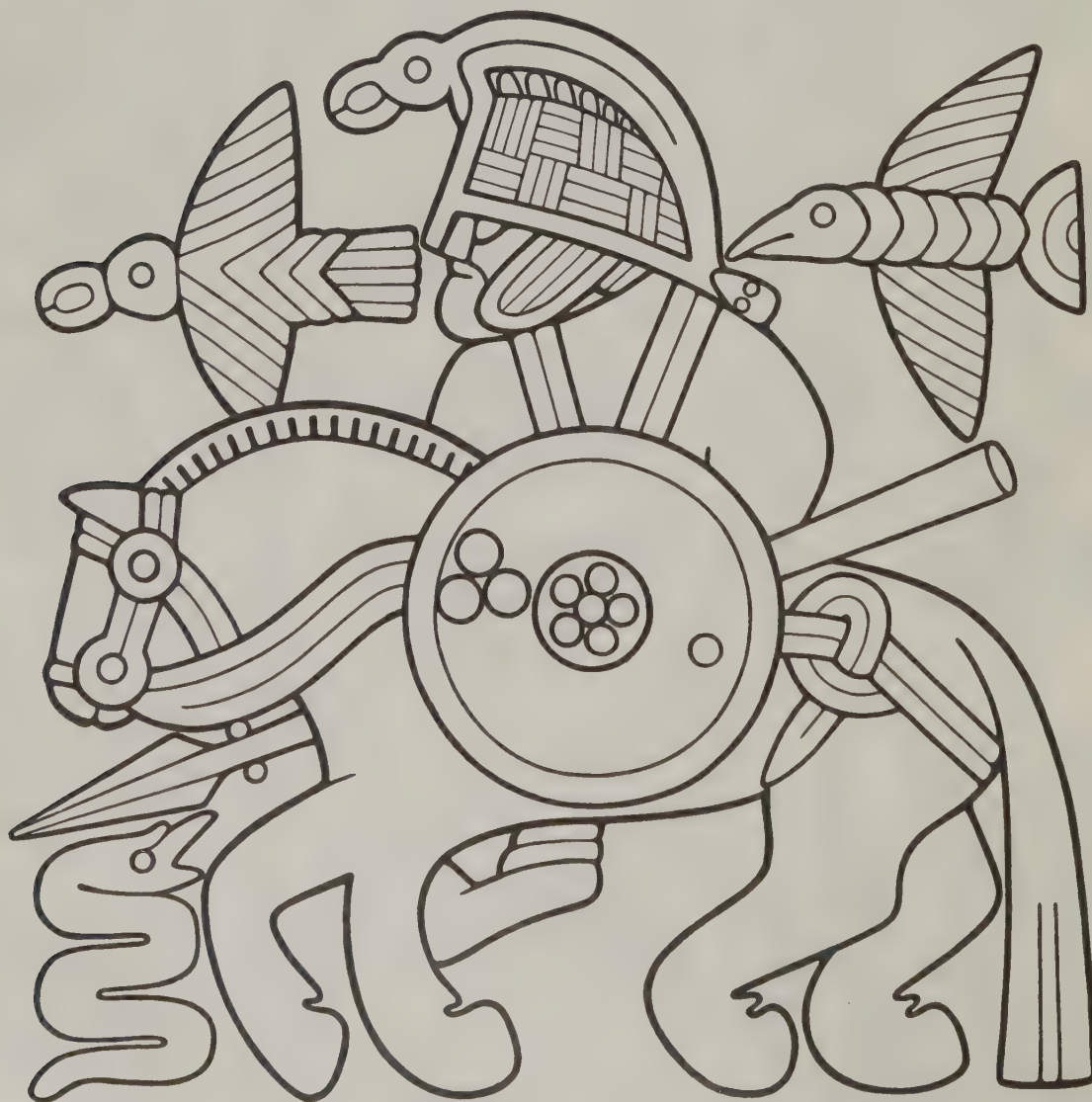
This myth is important because it shows that although the gods and giants are nearly equal in wisdom, Odin was slightly more learned than the



A carved wall of the stave church at Urnes, Norway

wisest giant. The superiority of the gods over the giants was maintained. In the same way, Odin once displayed his superiority in knowledge over men.

The story begins with two king's sons, the brothers Geirrod and Agnar. Geirrod, a favorite of Odin, gains through treachery the entire kingdom from Agnar, Frigg's favorite. Frigg tells Odin that Geirrod is a miser, and when Odin sets off to investigate the charge, she sends word to Geirrod. She tells him that a dangerous wizard is coming. When Odin arrives, wearing a blue cloak and calling himself Grimnir, Geirrod has him tied up between two fires for eight nights. Geirrod's young son brings Odin something to drink, and the god rewards the boy by reciting a long catalogue of mythological lore, in verse. Odin begins by telling of the homes of the gods: Thor lives in Thrudheim, Frey in Alfheim, and so forth. He gives much detail about Valholl, his own hall. He tells of how large and splendid the hall is, how Odin feeds his wolves and sends his ravens out seeking knowledge through all the world. Then he tells of the world tree, Yggdrasill. It has three roots, running into the worlds of the dead, of the giants, and of men. An eagle sits atop it and a dragon below, while the squirrel Ratatosk runs back and forth bearing harsh words between the two. Serpents and harts gnaw at its twigs and roots, and the tree itself is rotten. Now Odin tells of the creation of the world, and finally



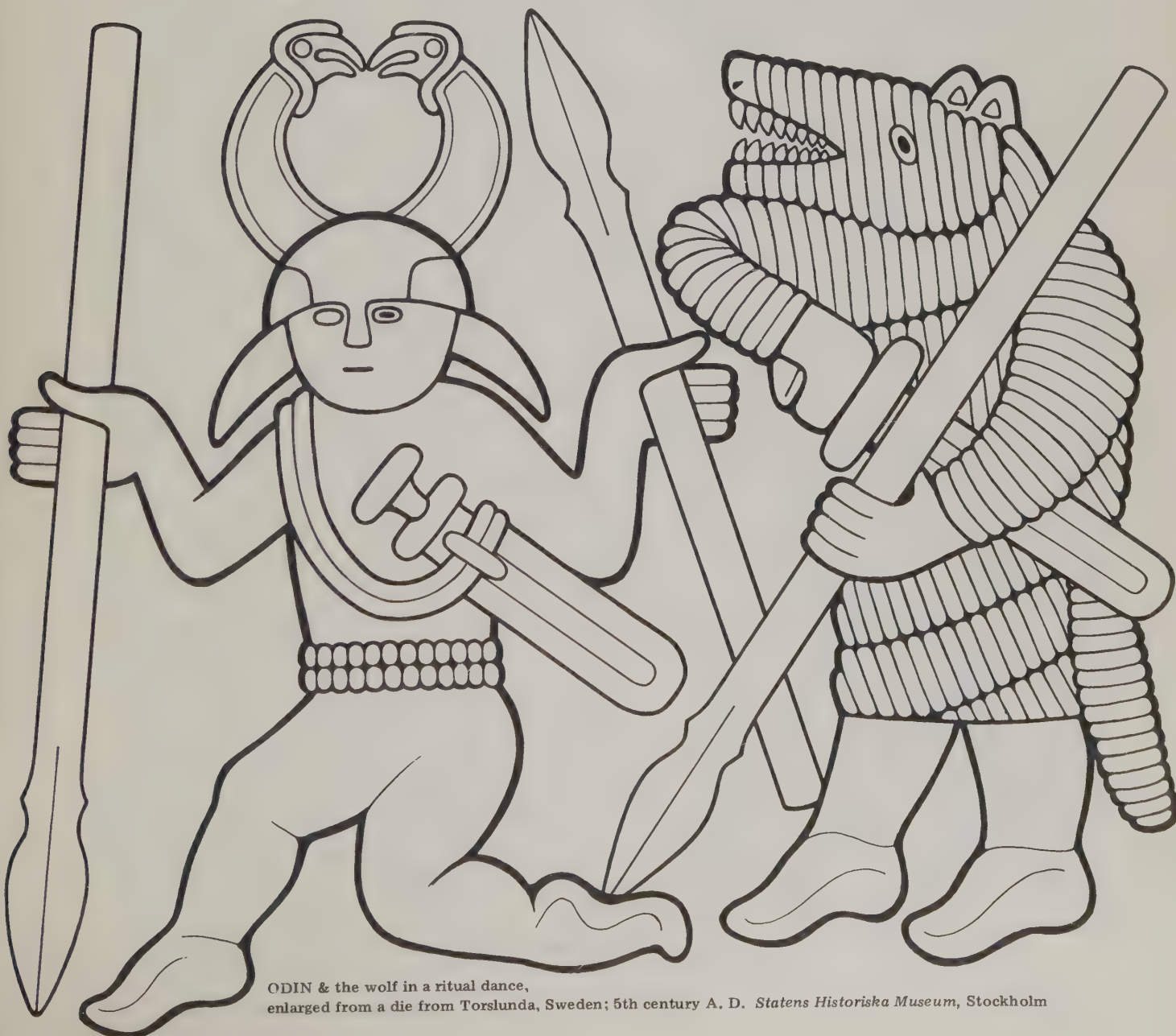
ODIN from the helmet found in Grave 14, Vendel, Sweden; 7th century A.D. *Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm*

he turns to the most important subject, Ragnarok. He builds up to a terrifying climax, beginning by listing all the names of Odin and ending with the following lines, spoken to Geirrod:

Ygg shall have your sword-mown body,
I know that your life has ended;
Goddesses are wrathful—Now you see Odin,
Come to me if you can!

Geirrod leaps up to free Odin from the fire. But he trips and falls on his own sword, and that is his death. Thus Ygg (another name for Odin) has Geirrod's "sword-mown body," just as the god had predicted. No man's wisdom can withstand that of Odin.

By now it is obvious that Odin was treacherous and untrustworthy. He delighted in stirring up strife among kinsmen and sometimes betrayed his chosen favorites. One story tells of a king, Harald Wartooth. Odin had taught him a special military formation, and with it he had conquered most of Scandinavia. Late in life he entered battle and saw the enemy army drawn up



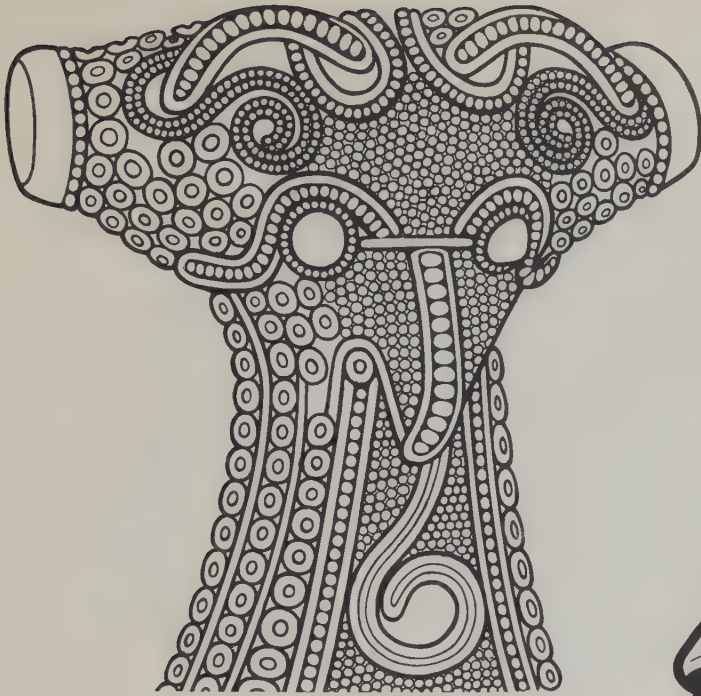
ODIN & the wolf in a ritual dance,
enlarged from a die from Torslunda, Sweden; 5th century A. D. *Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm*

in the same formation. He knew then that Odin had betrayed him. During the battle he was killed by his charioteer, actually Odin in disguise.

Odin's name, in different form, is the first part of the name of the day of the week Wednesday. The name Odin probably meant "leader of the frenzied." This may refer to his role as the god of poetry and the dead. It might also refer to the berserks. They were warriors who became frenzied before a battle and fought madly, paying no attention to the wounds they received. The word berserk means "bear-shirt" and refers to the belief that these men changed themselves into animals before battle. It is the origin of our expression to "go berserk."



A ritual dance with two *berserks*, from a die from Torslunda, Sweden, 5th century A.D. *Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm*



THOR, below, holding his hammer MJOLLNIR, from a tenth century bronze statuette; *Thjodminjasafn*, Reykjavik, Iceland; a Thor hammer, left, from a silver brooch; *Statens Historiska Museum*, Stockholm

Although Odin was the All-father, in many ways the most important god was his son Thor. The name Thor, which is found in the weekday name Thursday, probably means “the thunderer,” and indeed Thor was associated with thunder and lightning. His weapon was the hammer Mjollnir, which may represent a bolt of lightning. With it he could strike the mightiest blows, and he often did. He was the protector of gods and men, using his great strength and his hammer to kill giants and other evil creatures. It was said that if he did not slay them, no men could live and the giants would inhabit the stronghold of the gods. One tenth century Icelandic poet composed the following verse:

The hammer rang on Keila's head,
Kjallandi you killed completely
Earlier you killed Lut and Leidi
You made Byseyra's blood flow
You halted Hengjankjapta
Hyrokkin died before,
And before that the dark
Svivor had lost her life.

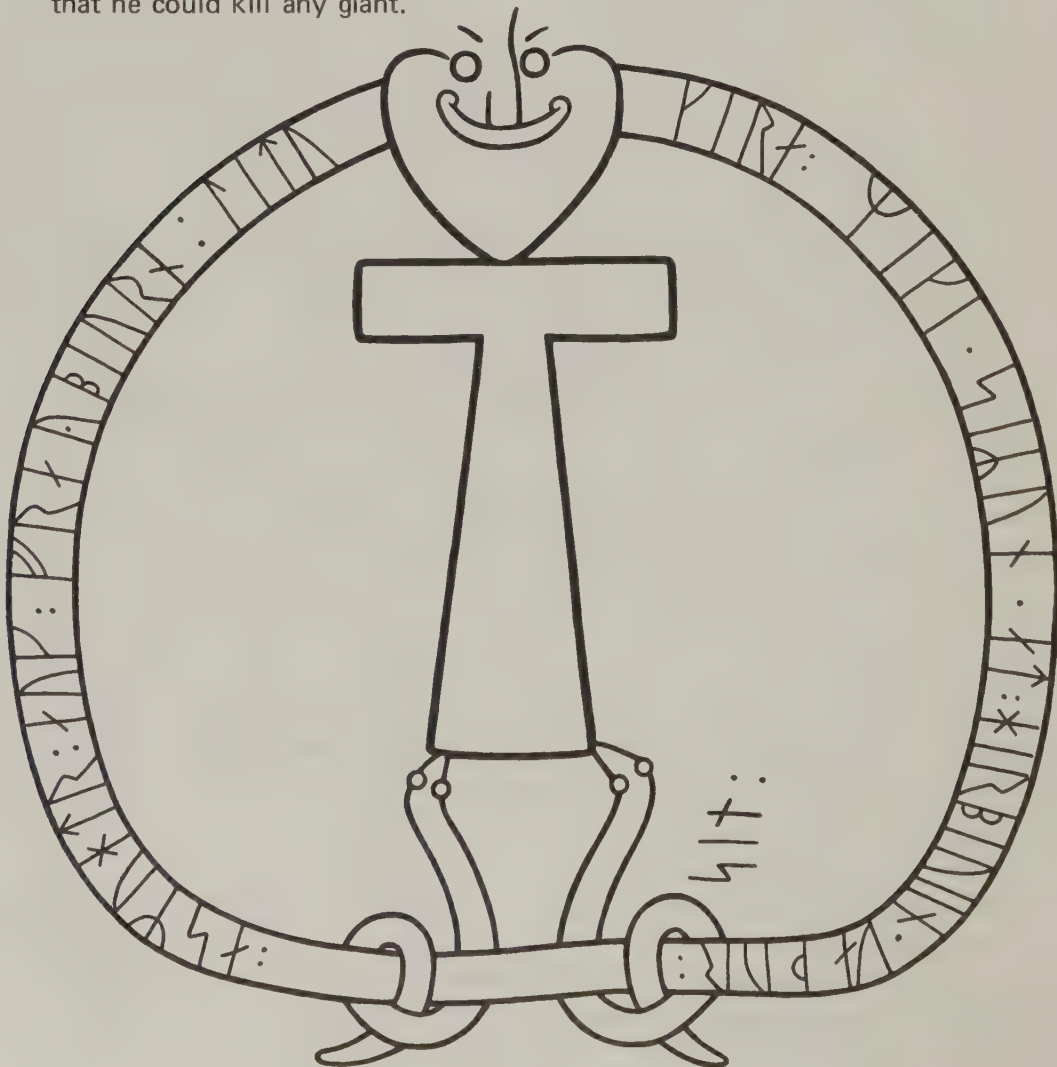


The names in the verse refer to giants killed by Thor, although the actual

myths have all been lost. One story which has survived, however, tells of how Thor killed the giant Hrungrnir.

Odin had ridden Sleipnir to giantland. There he and the giant Grungrnir began to argue over who had the finer horse. When Odin rode off the giant followed, all the way into Asgard, the stronghold of the gods. Thor was in a rage, but he could not attack the giant, for Hrungrnir had forgotten his weapons. The two agreed to fight a duel at a place in giantland. The giants built a companion for Hrungrnir. It was an enormous clay man, nine miles high and three miles wide. Into it they placed the heart of a mare. Hrungrnir's heart, however, was of stone, as was his head. His weapons were a shield and a whetstone. Thor's companion was a boy called Thjalfi. He served his master better than the clay man served his, for Thjalfi told Hrungrnir that Thor would attack from below. Hrungrnir then stood on his shield and was without protection when Thor attacked from in front. The giant hurled his whetstone and Thor his hammer. The two met in midair. The hammer continued on and killed Hrungrnir. The whetstone was splintered, but a small piece ended up in Thor's head. It was never removed, and apparently the Norsemen believed that they had to be careful with whetstones, to avoid giving Thor a headache.

The myth of Thor's battle with Hrungrnir was important. Hrungrnir was the strongest of all the giants. By killing Hrungrnir, Thor therefore showed that he could kill any giant.



THOR and his hammer from a stone from Åby, Västernorrland, Södermanland

Thor's greatest enemy, however, was not a giant. It was the Midgard serpent, a gigantic snake that lay in the sea, encircling the entire earth. Thor's greatest adventure, and the subject of several myths, was when he went fishing for the Midgard serpent.

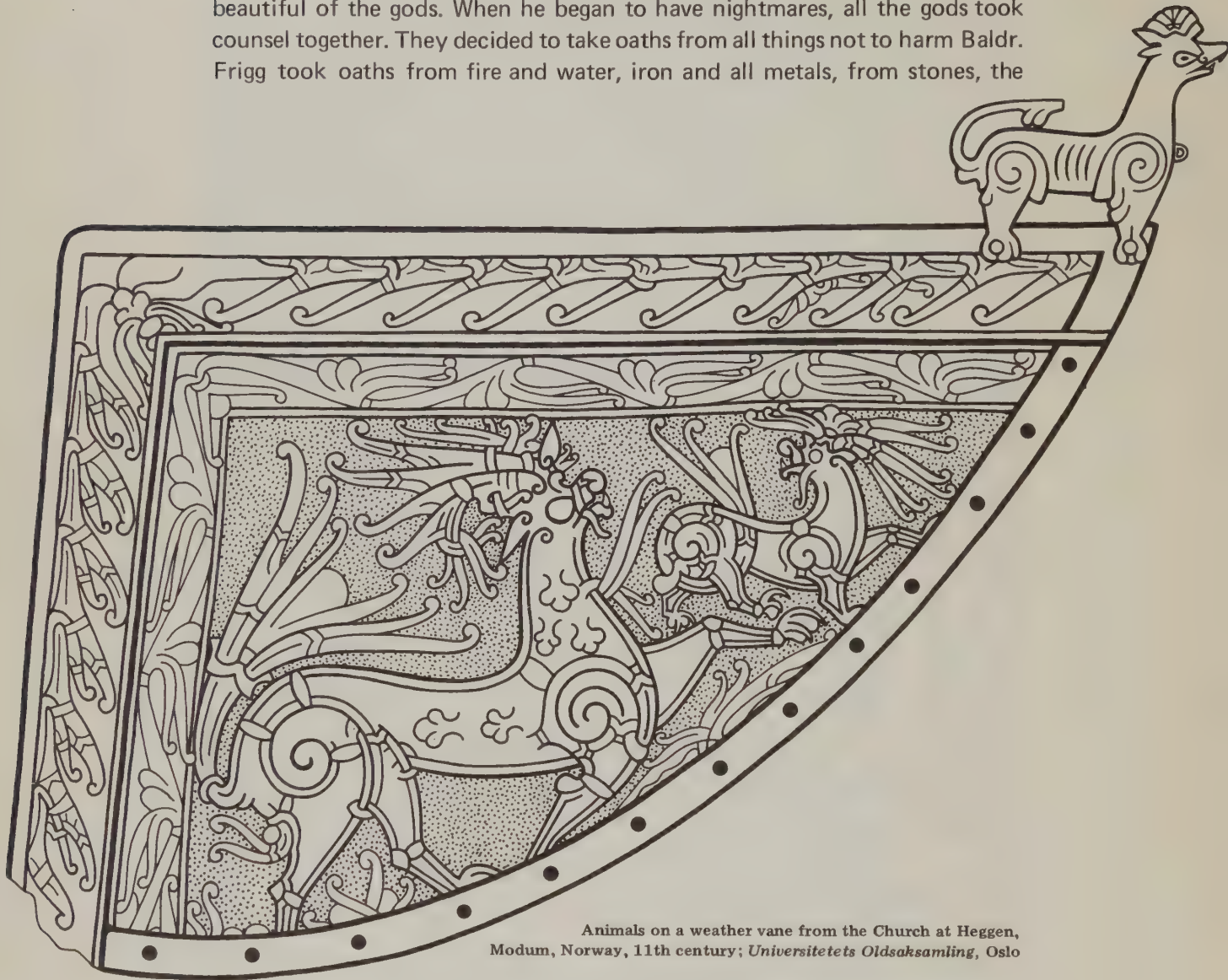
According to the fullest account, the story began when Thor set off alone for giantland to the east. He came to the house of a giant, Hymir. The next morning the giant wanted to go out fishing, and Thor begged to go along. Thor must have looked small next to the giant, who laughed at his puny size. But he agreed that Thor could help row the boat and asked Thor to pick out his own bait. Thor chose the entire head of Hymir's largest ox! Then they set off together, and with Thor's help the boat flew through the waves. He kept right on rowing when they reached Hymir's usual fishing grounds and did not stop until they were in the open sea where the Midgard serpent would be. The amazed giant looked on as Thor then baited his hook—it was not a small one—with the head of the ox and dropped it into the sea. Soon the serpent took the bait, and a terrible struggle followed. Thor braced his feet against



THOR and the MIDGARD SERPENT, from a mount from Solberga, Sweden; *Statens Historiska Museum*

the bottom of the boat. As he pushed, his feet drove right through the boat's hull and dug deeply into the bottom of the sea. Glaring fiercely, Thor pulled up the Midgard serpent. Just as he raised his hammer to kill the serpent, the terrified giant cut the line. The serpent sank back into the sea to await Ragnarok and his final battle with Thor.

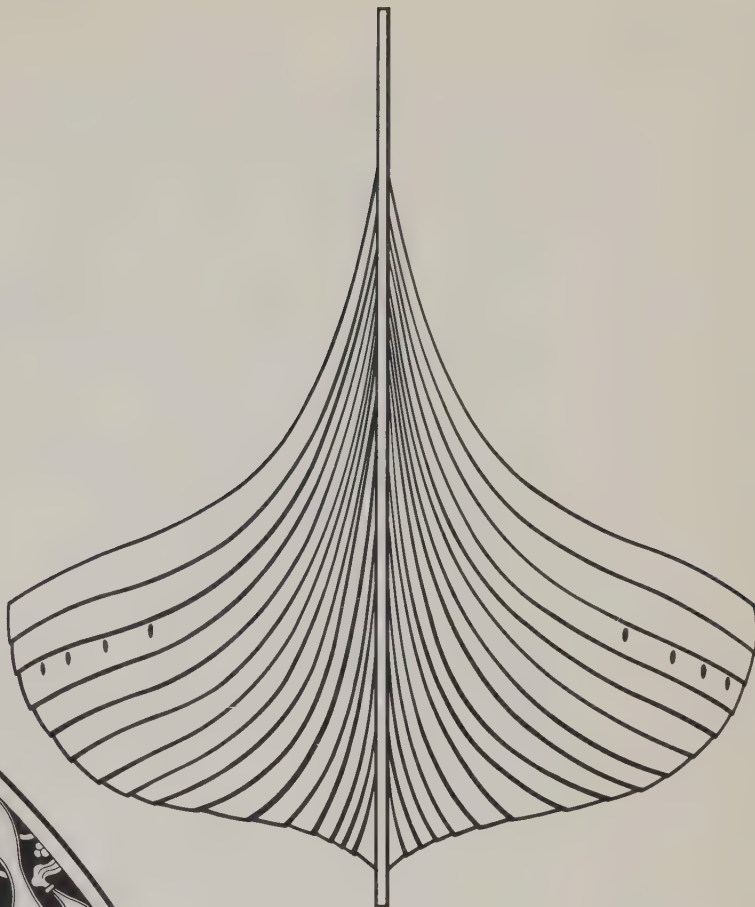
One of the best-known Norse myths tells of Odin's son Baldr, the most beautiful of the gods. When he began to have nightmares, all the gods took counsel together. They decided to take oaths from all things not to harm Baldr. Frigg took oaths from fire and water, iron and all metals, from stones, the



Animals on a weather vane from the Church at Heggen, Modum, Norway, 11th century; *Universitetets Oldsaksamling*, Oslo

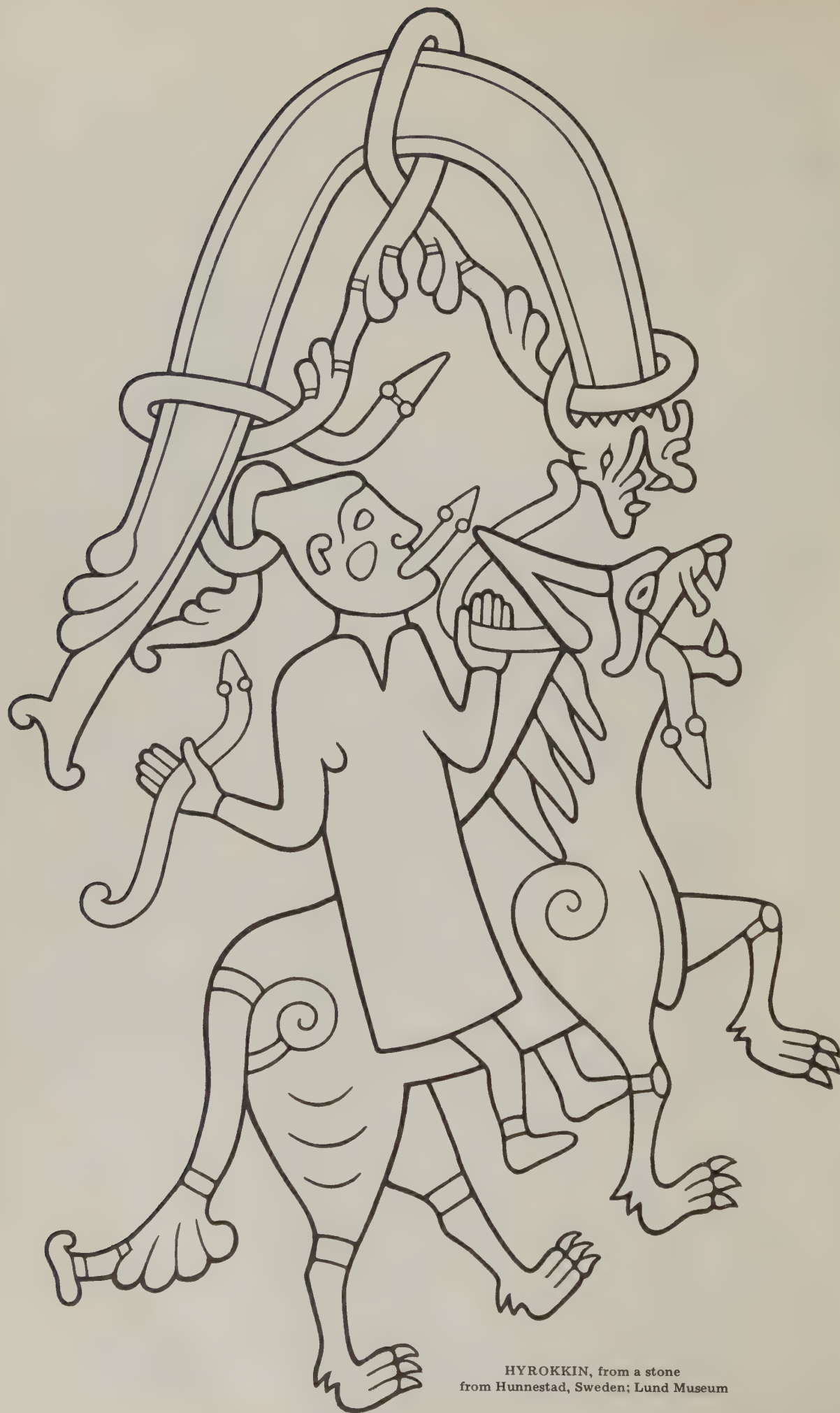
earth, wood, sickness, animals, birds, poison and snakes. Since Baldr could not be harmed now, the gods played a game with him: they threw various weapons at him, and all bounced off harmlessly. This made Loki jealous. He went to Frigg and learned that only one thing had not sworn the oath. She had not made mistletoe swear, because it seemed too young to her. Loki took the sprig of mistletoe and gave it to Baldr's blind brother, Hod. When his turn came in the game, Hod threw the mistletoe at Baldr, who fell dead when it pierced him. This was the greatest calamity that had ever befallen the gods.

Baldr was given a splendid funeral, like any Viking chieftain. He was placed aboard a magnificent ship. It was so large that the gods could not launch it, and a giantess named Hyrokkin had to help. She came riding from



The Gokstad ship

The prow of the great Oseberg ship; Viking Ship Hall, Oslo



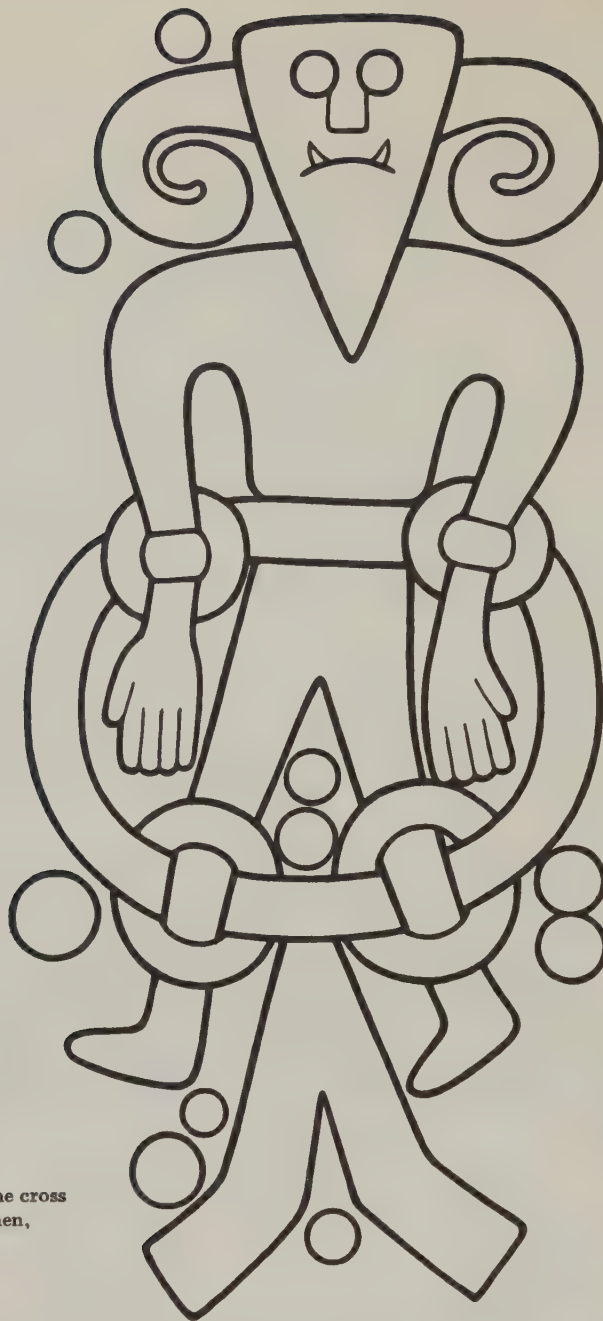
HYROKKIN, from a stone
from Hunnestad, Sweden; Lund Museum

giantland on a wolf, using snakes for the reins. After Hyrokkin launched the ship it was set afire. Aboard were Baldr and his wife Nanna, who had died of sorrow, and many precious gifts, including Odin's ring Draupnir. Meanwhile, Baldr's brother Hermod the bold had been sent to the land of the dead, to try to get Baldr back. He rode Odin's horse Sleipnir for nine nights through dark and deep canyons until he came to the world of the dead. There he spoke with Hel, the ruler of that world. When she learned of the sorrow of the gods, she agreed that Baldr could return to the world of the living under one condition. Everything must weep for him. Just when it seemed the condition would be met, the gods found an old woman, called Thokk. She said; "Thokk will weep dry tears for Baldr's death. I never had any use for him. Let Hel keep what she has." Since she refused to weep, Baldr had to stay in the realm of the dead. Many of the gods thought that Thokk was Loki in disguise.

Thus it was that Loki brought about the death of Baldr, the greatest calamity ever to befall the gods. For this it was said that the gods captured him and bound him to three stones with the guts of his son Narfi. A poisonous snake was hung over him, but his wife Sigyn catches the venom in a bowl



LOKI, left, from a rune stone, Ardre III, Gotland, Sweden



LOKI from a stone cross
from Kirby Stephen,
Westmorland

before it can fall into his face. Only when she goes to empty the bowl does the venom strike Loki, and then he struggles so violently that an earthquake occurs. Loki will remain bound until Ragnarok—the end of the world—but then he will fight on the side of the forces of evil.

Given his role in the destruction of the gods, it seems strange that Loki was numbered among the gods and was said to be their friend. Loki was of giant parentage, but he was the sworn-brother of Odin and sometimes accompanied Thor on his journeys to the east to slay giants. And although he often got the gods into trouble, usually he was forced to get them out of trouble again. One of the most amusing examples concerns the retrieval of Thor's hammer, Mjollnir, from a giant named Thrym. When Thor awoke one morning to find Mjollnir gone, Loki borrowed Freyja's feather suit and flew to giantland. There Thrym told Loki that he had hidden Thor's hammer far underground and would only return it in exchange for Freyja's hand in marriage. When the gods again met in council, it was decided that instead of sending Freyja, the fairest of the goddesses, the gods would send the manly

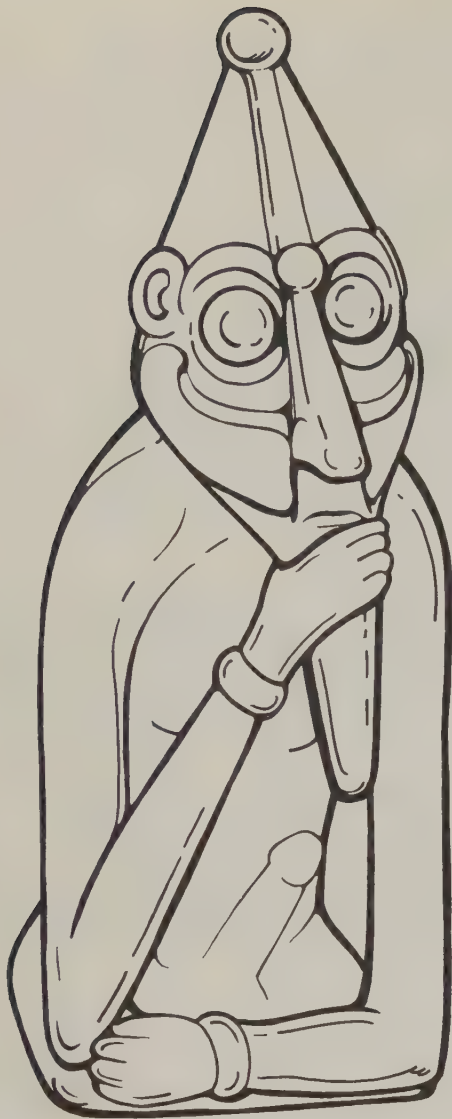
Thor, disguised as a blushing bride. Thor was understandably reluctant, but agreed when Loki pointed out the consequences of the permanent loss of Mjollnir. Then:

They bound on Thor the bridal linen
and the noble necklace of the Brisings;
a housewife's keys hung jangling from him,
and his dainty skirt reached down to his knees;
about his breast they put broad stone,
and bound on his head a woman's bonnet.

With Loki disguised as his handmaiden, Thor set off for giantland. At the wedding feast the "bride" ate an entire ox, eight salmon, all the delicacies intended for the women—and washed it down with three barrels of mead. Loki cleverly calmed the worried giant by telling him that Freyja was so hungry



ODIN, THOR, and FREY from the Skog tapestry, Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm



because she had not eaten for nine nights, so great was her eagerness to come to giantland. But when Thrym lifted his bride's veil to steal a kiss, the sight of the burning black eyes sent him leaping back the length of the hall. Again Loki saved the day, telling Thrym that Freyja had not slept for nine nights, so great was her eagerness to come to giantland. Finally the hammer was brought out, to hallow the bride, and Thor made short work of the assembled giants.

It is plain that Loki was never worshipped, but he played quite a role in the myths of the Norsemen, sometimes helping the gods, sometimes harming them. In a mythological world where two sets of forces were opposed

to one another, it is perhaps not too surprising that a place was found for a figure like Loki, who bridged the gap between the forces of good and the forces of evil.

Another important god was Frey. Little is known of him now, except from such indirect evidence as ancient place names formed from the name of a god. From these it seems apparent that Frey was a god of fertility. He played a major role in the success of the harvest each year and was also involved in human sexuality; more than one source shows him as having unusually large genitals.

One poem tells of how Frey got his bride, Gerd, from the land of the giants. He sat one day in Odin's high seat, where all the world could be seen. In giantland he noticed Gerd and immediately was so in love with her that he



Top: FREY, from an 11th-century bronze statuette; below: a "loving couple" from a small gold relief; both are in the Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

fell sick. He sent his servant, Skirnir, to giantland to woo her for him. Taking Frey's horse and sword, Skirnir made the dangerous journey. At first Gerd would not hear of Frey's proposal. She refused precious gifts and ignored threats. Finally Skirnir began to utter magic curses, implying that Gerd would never marry properly. At this she agreed to meet Frey nine nights later. When he heard the news, Frey lamented that he would have to wait so long. There the poem ends. It is not very clear, but it shows Frey's role in fertility.

The goddesses are shadowy figures. Many are named only in lists. Two alone have real personalities. Frigg, whose name (in an earlier form) has been retained in the name of the weekday Friday, was the wife of Odin. She shared some of his features. She was chief among the goddesses and could see into the future. She was probably a strict, older woman. Freyja, on the other hand, was young and beautiful. She was the sister of Frey. Like Frey she was involved in fertility, and stories tell of how giants tried to take her away to giantland. They were never successful.

There were many other gods and goddesses, some worshipped only in certain areas or at certain times. Some were probably not worshipped at all, although stories were told about them. Together, however, Odin, Thor, and Frey were the three most important gods. Each stood for an important aspect of society. Odin represented kings, princes and other rulers. Thor represented the warriors, particularly in their role of defenders of society. Frey stood for agriculture and human and animal reproduction. In this way the three most important aspects of Viking society were gathered together in Viking religion.

In the great struggle between gods and giants, both sides were very powerful. The gods triumph, but by slim margins only. Odin outwits Vafthrudnir, Thor kills Hrungr, and Frey obtains a beautiful wife from among the giants. At the end of the world, however, the balance of power will tip the other way, and the forces of chaos and evil will destroy the gods. The end of the world is called Ragnarok, which means "the doom of the gods."



From the helmet
from Vendel
grave 14

The beginning of Ragnarok will be signalled by three fierce winters, when snow and icy winds will blow from all directions, and the sun will offer no heat at all. No summer will intervene between the winters. They will follow three other winters, in which order will break down among men. Brothers will kill their brothers and fathers their sons, for the sake of greed; great battles will take place everywhere. After the three fierce winters, one wolf will swallow the sun and another the moon, and the stars will vanish from the sky. A great earthquake will shake the mountains and trees and all bonds will be broken, setting free all the forces of evil. The wicked wolf Fenrir, with fire blazing from his eyes and nostrils, will open his enormous jaws from the earth up to the sky, and the Midgard serpent will come out of the sea. The heavens will part as Surt leads the forces of evil from Muspell, with fires burning both before and behind him.

The last battle will take place on the field Vigrid. The wolf Fenrir will swallow Odin but be killed by Odin's son Vidarr. Thor will slay his old adversary, the Midgard serpent, but will then stagger back nine steps and die, overcome by the serpent's deadly venom. Frey will fall before Surt, after a long battle, and all the other gods will perish as well. Then Surt will spread fire throughout the whole world.

Thus will the world of the gods end. And yet it will also be a beginning—the beginning of a new era. The earth will again grow green and fair; unsown fields will blossom. Two sons of Odin, Vidarr and Vali, will dwell at Idavoll, where Asgard was before. Thor's sons Magni and Modi will join them, and



FENRIR the wolf, from the Cammin casket, destroyed during World War II

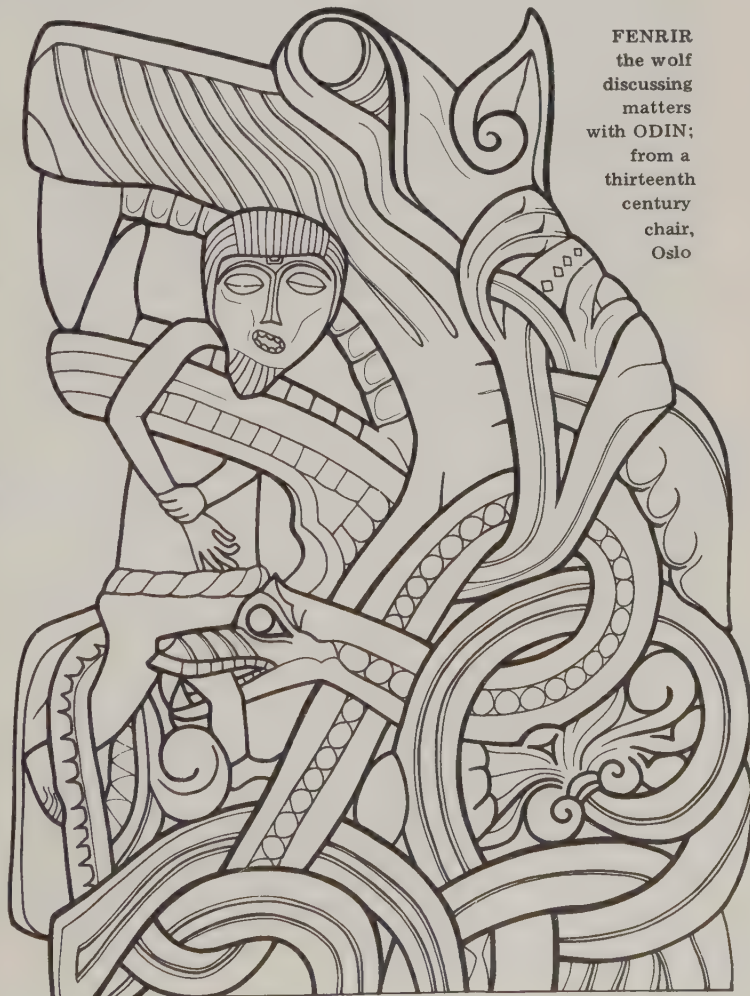
they will still have the hammer Mjollnir. But most important is that Baldr and his brother Hod, who killed him, will return from the world of the dead and will dwell together in peace. Men will again repopulate the earth, and a daughter of the sun, no less fair than her mother, will bring heat and light to them. The new era will be one of peace and tranquillity.

Besides stories about gods, the Norsemen also had stories about great heroes. In many cases the line between myth and hero tale is difficult to draw, as in the story of the cursed treasure in the cycle of stories about Sigurd, the greatest of the ancient Scandinavian heroes.

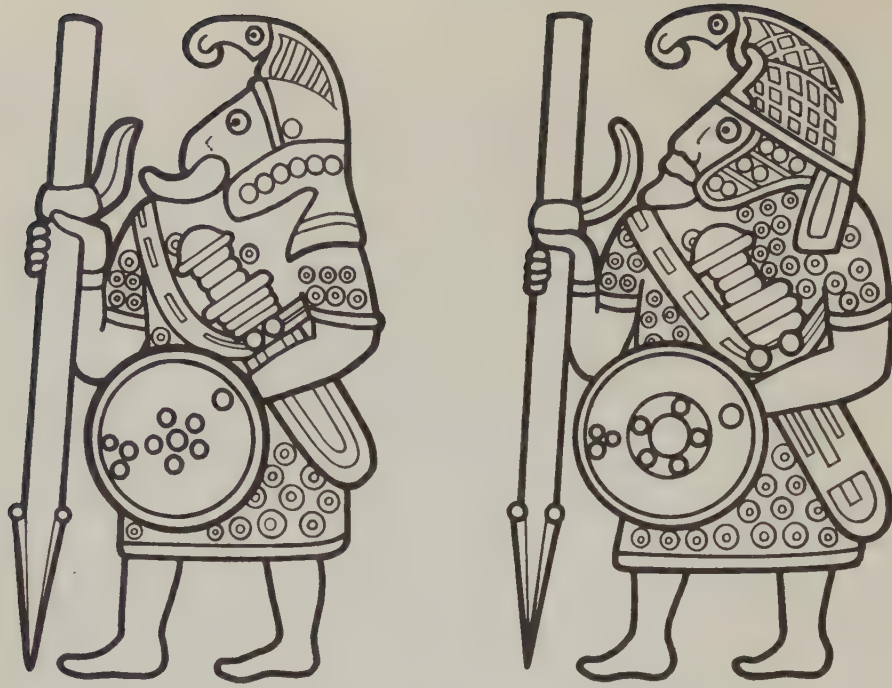
When Odin, Loki and a god called Hoenir were travelling together, Loki killed an otter who was eating a salmon. The gods went on to a nearby farm, and asked for lodgings, showing the farmer, Hreidmar, their catch. Hreidmar at once ordered his two sons, Fafnir and Regin, to capture the gods, for the otter was Hreidmar's son, too. As reconciliation the gods finally agreed to fill and cover all of Otter's flayed hide. Odin then ordered Loki to travel to the world of the dark elves. There Loki captured the dwarf Andvari and forced him to pay an enormous ransom of gold. At last Andvari had only a small ring, which gave him the power to renew his wealth. But Loki took the ring. At that Andvari cursed the ring, saying that it would be the death of all who owned it.

On Loki's return Odin liked the look of the ring and removed it from the enormous pile of gold. It turned out, however, that Andvari's gold could not quite cover Otter's body; one whisker was still visible. Odin had to cover it with the ring. At that Loki repeated Andvari's curse, which held true ever after.

The great German composer, Richard Wagner, made this the central symbol of his vast cycle of music dramas, *The Ring of the Nibelung*. In the Norse tales, however, the ring is of less central importance, although the prophecy is fulfilled. After the gods left Hreidmar, Fafnir and Regin demanded some of the gold.



FENRIR
the wolf
discussing
matters
with ODIN;
from a
thirteenth
century
chair,
Oslo



Enlarged from the helmet from Vendel grave 14; below: from a stone from Skramsta, Uppland, Sweden

When Hreidmar refused to give them even a single penny, they killed him. Now Fafnir assumed control of the hoard and refused to share any with his brother. Girding himself with the fierce sword Hrotti and Hreidmar's helmet of terror, which terrified all who saw it, Fafnir went off and changed himself into a dragon in order to protect the gold. Regin, however, travelled to King Hjalprek and became a smith. There he became the foster-father of Sigurd, son of Volsung.

Volsung was himself the great-grandson of Odin, although he was not a god. Volsung had ten sons and a daughter, Signy; the oldest son was Sigmund. When Volsung's daughter was to be married, an old man with only one eye, dressed in a shabby cloak with a hood, entered the hall. Volsung had built his hall around a mighty oak tree, and into this tree the old man thrust a sword, saying that the man who could draw this best of swords from the tree-trunk might have it. All the nobles assembled there tried, and all failed. Then Sigmund tried, and the sword came forth easily. Thus Sigmund got his sword from Odin, for that is who the old man was.

Angry at not getting the sword for himself, the bridegroom, King Siggeir, later arranged for the death of Volsung and had Volsung's ten sons bound in the forest. Each night a fierce wolf came and killed one brother, until only Sigmund was left. But Signy had honey spread on Sigmund's face, and when the wolf licked the honey, Sigmund bit off its tongue, thus killing it.

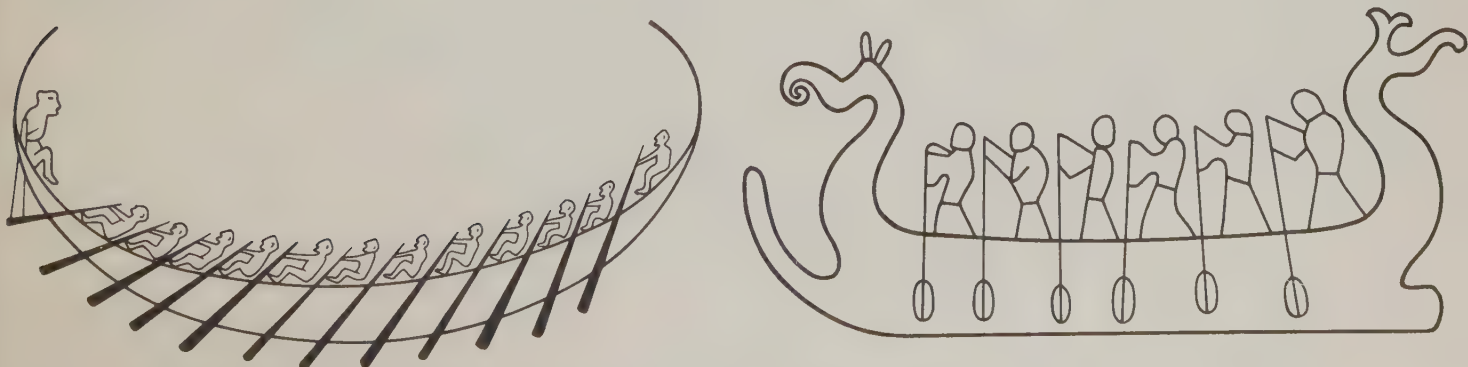


Sigmund escaped into the woods and lived alone in a cave. Some time later Signy changed her shape and went to visit her brother. Later she bore him a child, a boy called Sinfjotli. She tested his bravery by sewing his shirt to his skin and then tearing it off. Sinfjotli did not flinch. She sent Sinfjotli off to help Sigmund in his plans for vengeance. After some time spent living as wolves in the forest, the two came to Siggeir's hall. They slew many, including Siggeir's two children, but were captured and set in a mound under a great stone slab. But Signy had slipped Sigmund's sword to them before they were buried, and with it they cut their way through the slab. They returned to Siggeir's hall and burned it to the ground with Siggeir and his men still inside it.

Sigmund married Borgund and had a son called Helgi, a great hero in his own right. He overcame Hunding, a rich and powerful king, and thereafter he was known as Helgi the killer of Hunding. He turned back an attempt at revenge by the sons of Hunding and took over Hunding's lands for himself. Soon, however, he was accosted by a beautiful maiden, Sigrun, sometimes said to be a Valkyrie. Her father Hogni had promised her in marriage to Hodbrodd, very much against her will. Helgi amassed a large army and went off, with Sinfjotli at his side, to contend with Hodbrodd. In a pitched battle between two great armies, Helgi killed Hodbrodd. Sigrun was saved, and then she and Helgi married. Their love was so great that after Helgi's death, Sigrun visited him in his grave mound.

Sinfjotli had many more adventures. Once he and Borgund's brother were trying to woo the same woman. They quarreled, and Sinfjotli killed his mother-in-law's brother. Borgund wished to send Sinfjotli away, but Sigmund intervened and forced her to accept money as compensation for the loss of her brother. At her brother's funeral feast, Borgund offered a horn of mead to Sinfjotli, who saw that it was poisoned. She returned with a second poisoned horn, then a third. When she brought the third one, Sinfjotli finally took a drink, and immediately he fell down dead.

Sigmund sent Borgund away and ruled his kingdom alone for a time. Then he heard of a princess called Hjordis, the daughter of King Eylimi. Sigmund journeyed to Eylimi and asked for the hand of Hjordis in marriage. At that time, however, another king had also proposed to Hjordis; his name was Lyngvi. Hjordis chose Sigmund, and the two were married. Later, however, Lyngvi attacked Sigmund's kingdom with an enormous army. Sigmund and

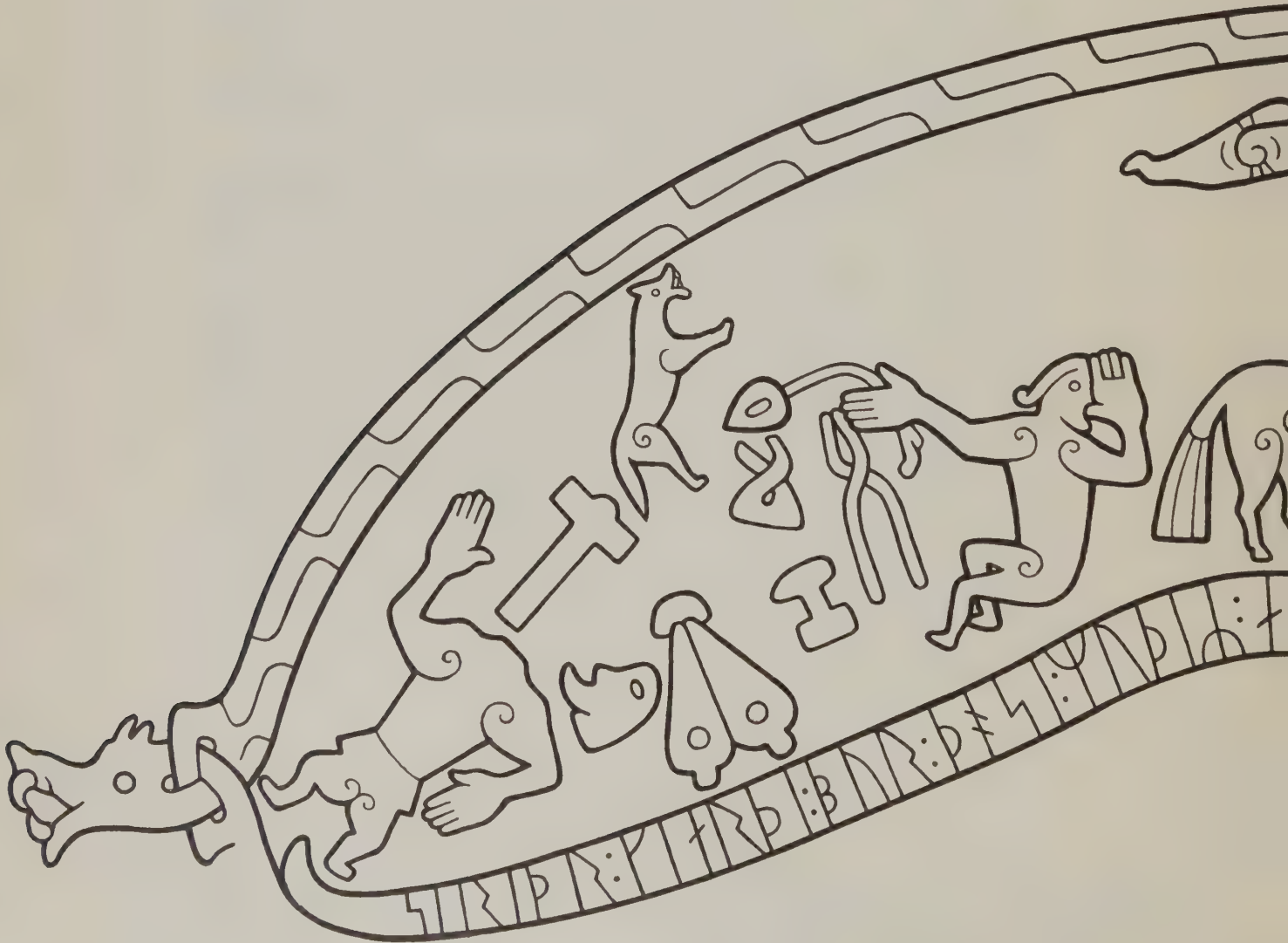


Early pictures of ancient Norse ships, from stones at Hågeby and Brandskog, Uppland, Sweden; c. 500 A.D. and earlier

his men fought bravely and well, until a mysterious one-eyed stranger appeared on the battlefield. This was, of course, Odin, who had now decided to turn against Sigmund. The stranger struck at Sigmund with his spear, and Sigmund's sword—the one he had pulled from the tree—broke into pieces. From that moment on the battle turned against him, and he fell along with Eylimi and many of their men.

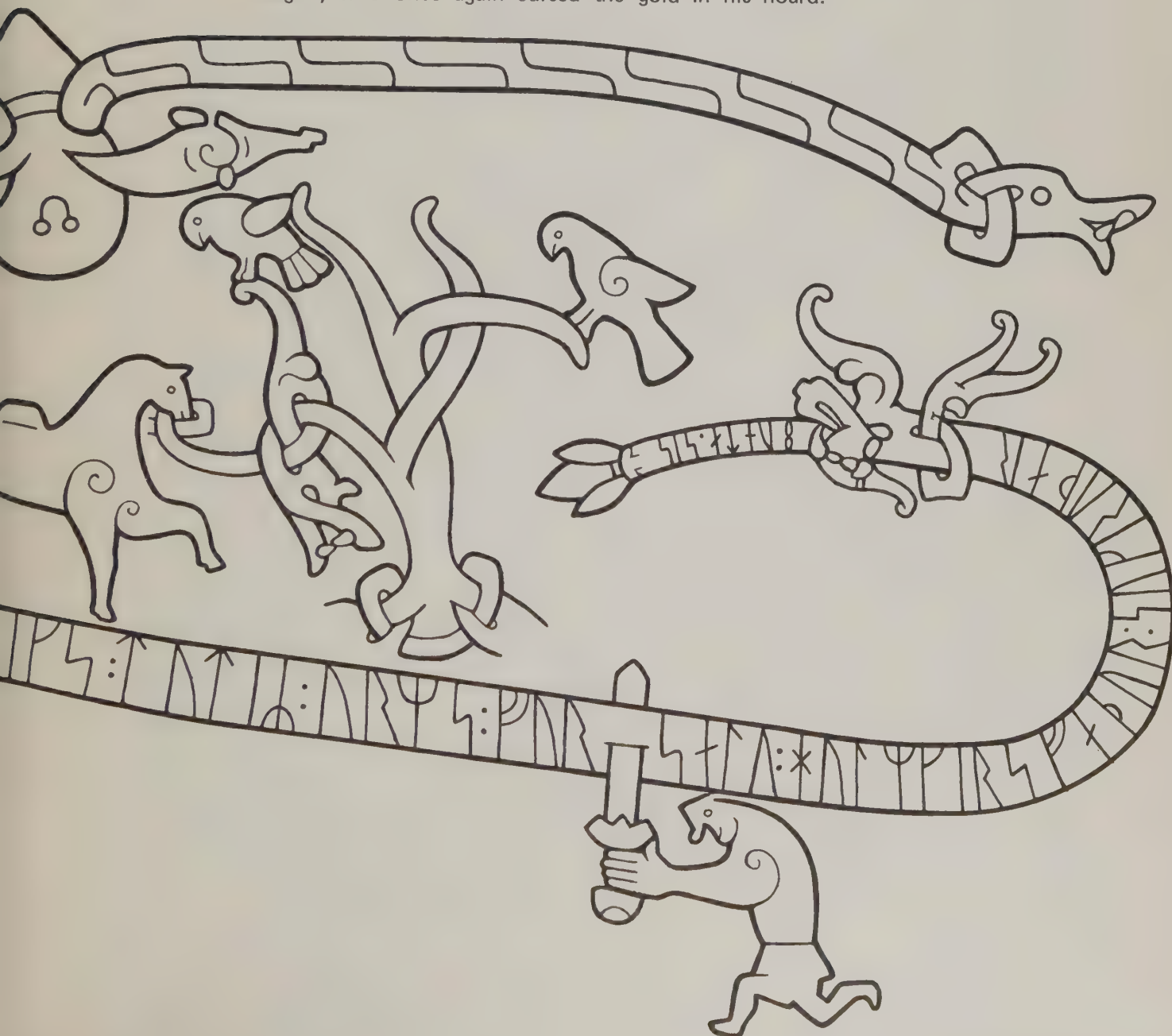
Hjordis, however, had escaped into the woods. She was pregnant with Sigmund's child. She found her way to King Hjalprek, where she gave birth to a son. That was Sigurd, "and when all the noblest men and kings are named in the old tales, Sigurd will always be ranked first in strength and accomplishment, valor and courage, in which he excelled all other men in the northern half of the world," as one medieval saga puts it.

Regin now re-enters the story. After joining his brother Fafnir in slaying their father, he was still given none of the gold hoard, and he came to King Hjalprek and raised Sigurd as his foster son. He told Sigurd of the dragon

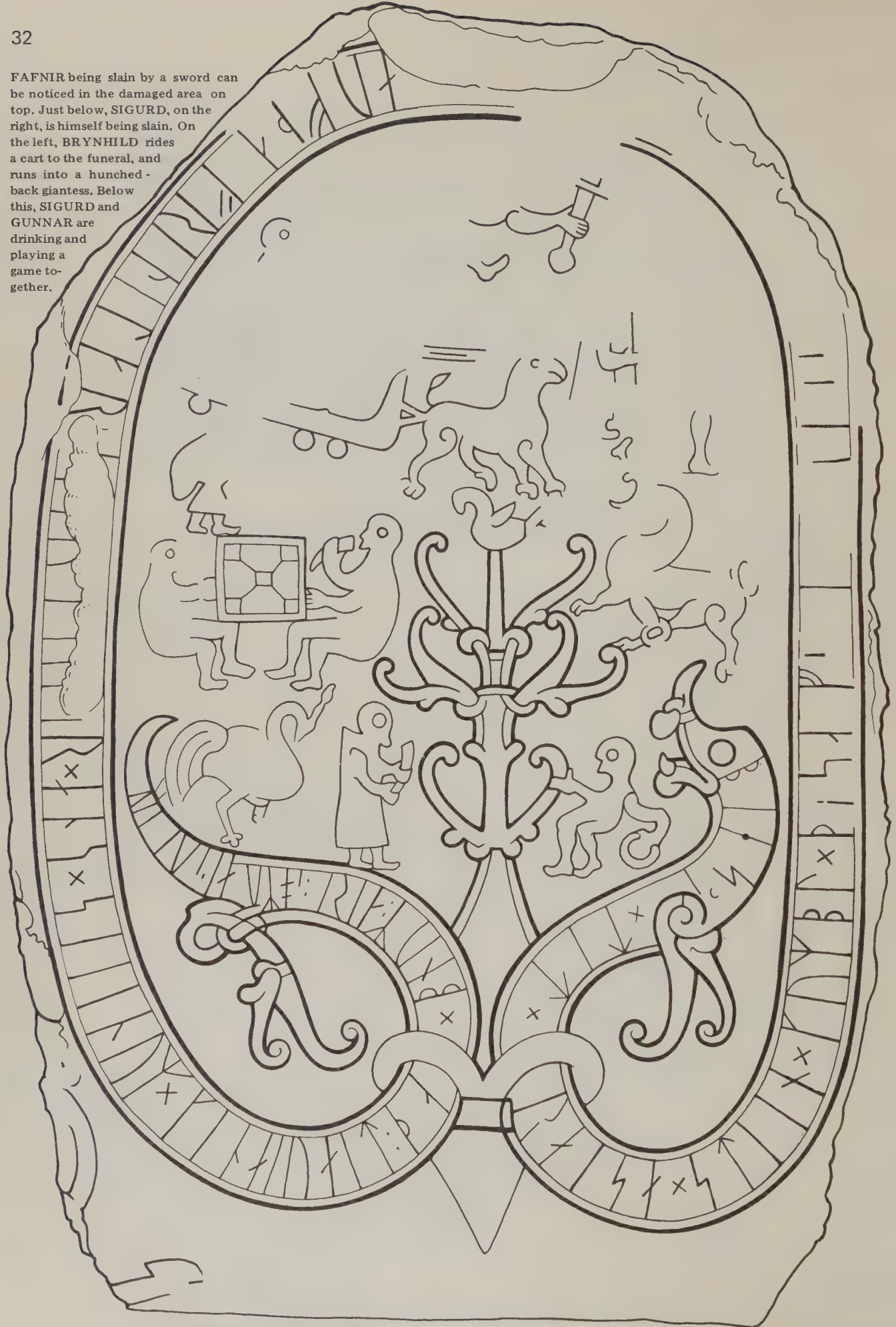


Fafnir and his gold, and urged Sigurd to kill the dragon and obtain the gold for himself. When Sigurd asked Regin to forge him a mighty sword, Regin made several attempts, but Sigurd easily broke each one. Finally Sigurd obtained the pieces of his father's broken sword, and Regin forged them into a single wondrous blade. Then he set off to avenge Sigmund, his father. With a large army he invaded the lands of King Lyngvi and his brothers. In a pitched battle, Sigurd's army overcame the enemy, and Sigurd himself cut down Lyngvi with the new sword. This was the first of his many famous deeds.

Now Sigurd gave in to Regin's incitements against Fafnir. The two climbed to the plain Gnitaeith, where the dragon had his lair. Regin taunted Sigurd to incite him into battle, then ran off and hid. Sigurd dug a ditch from which to strike the dragon from below. When Fafnir crawled over the ditch, Sigurd plunged his sword into the dragon's heart, up to the hilt. In a long conversation, Sigurd revealed his identity to the mortally-wounded dragon, who once again cursed the gold in his hoard.

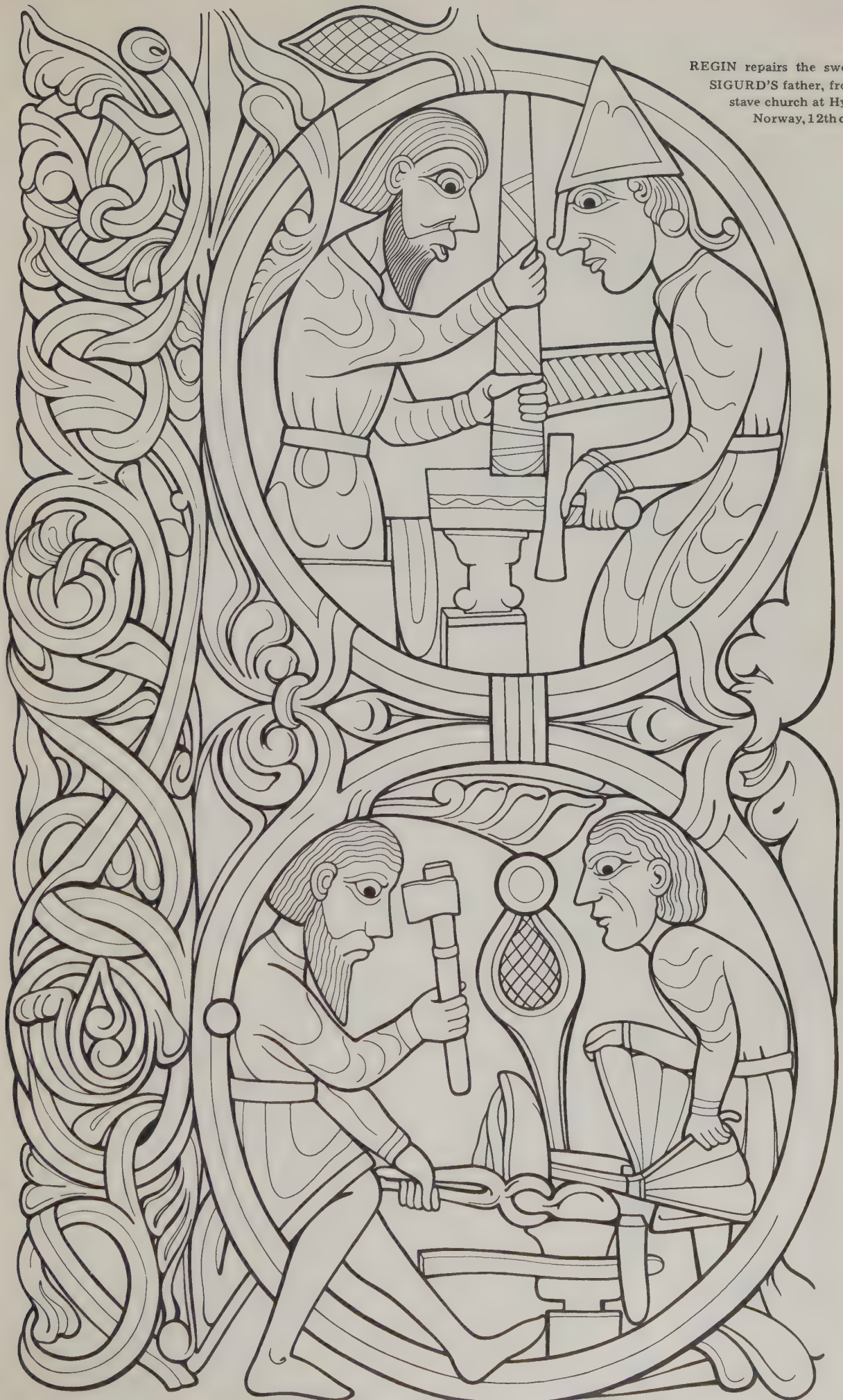


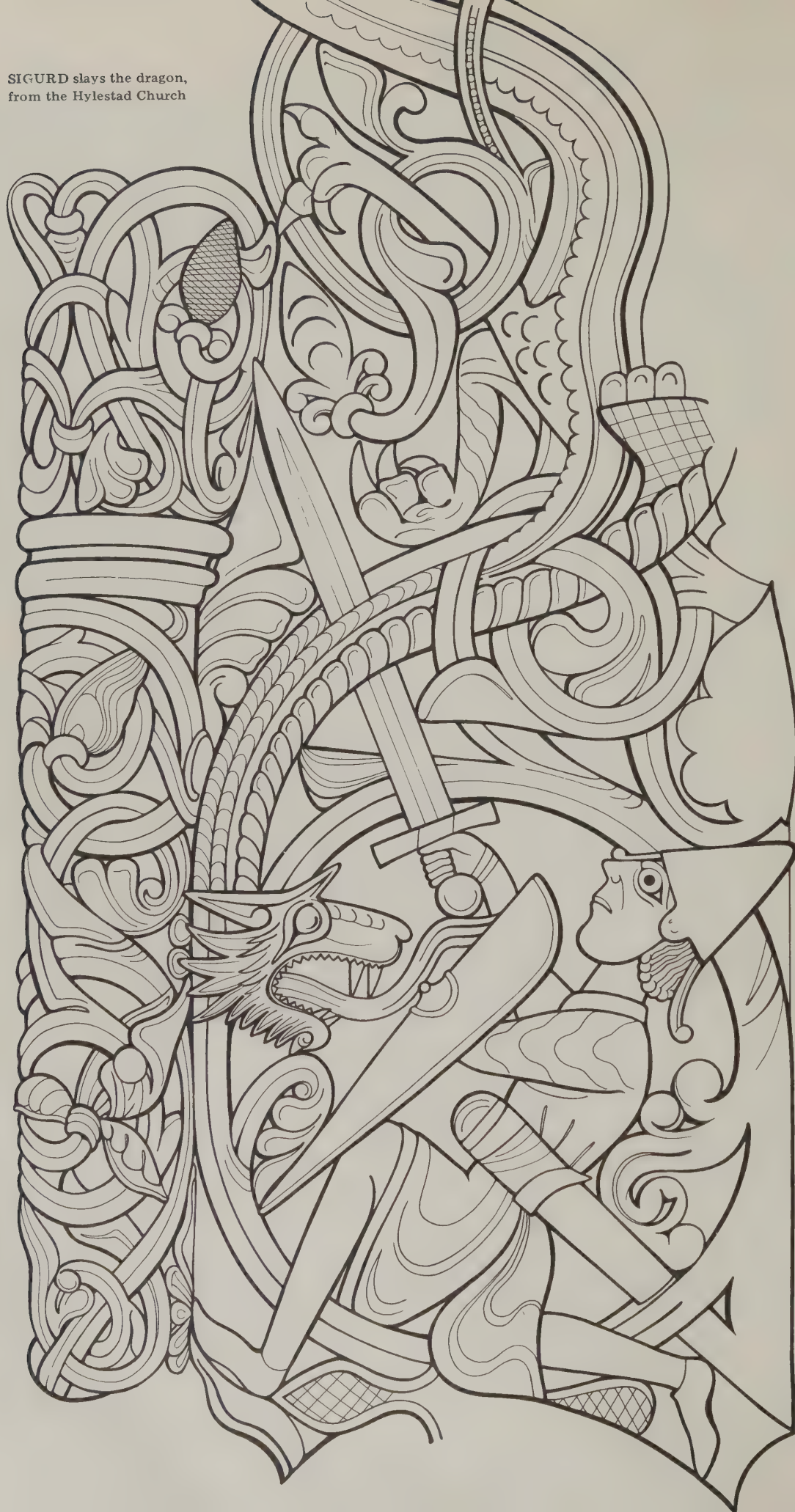
FAFNIR being slain by a sword can be noticed in the damaged area on top. Just below, SIGURD, on the right, is himself being slain. On the left, BRYNHILD rides a cart to the funeral, and runs into a hunched-back giantess. Below this, SIGURD and GUNNAR are drinking and playing a game together.



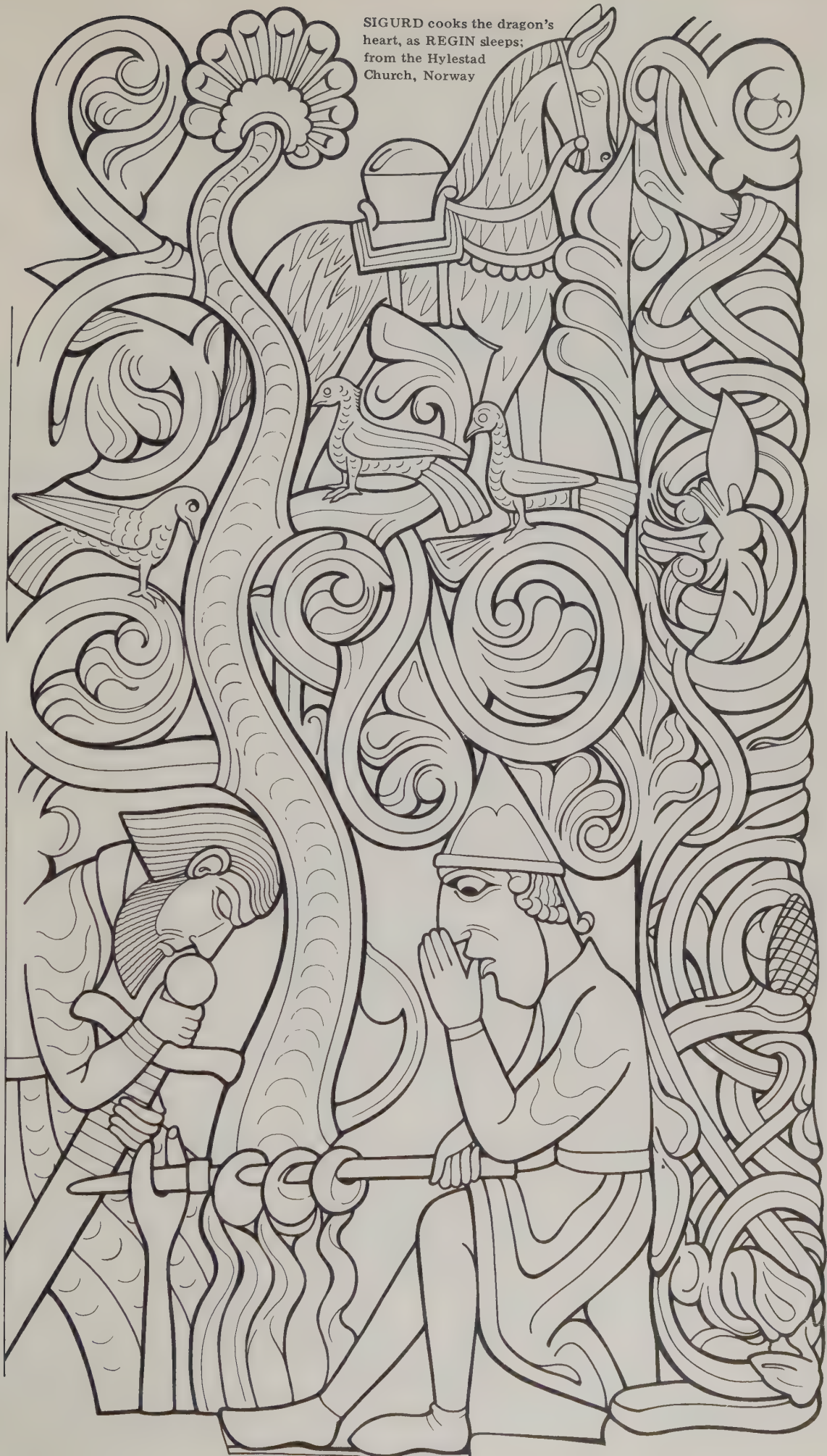
The Ockelbo stone, Sweden; on the right of the tree can be seen ANDVARI holding the ring.

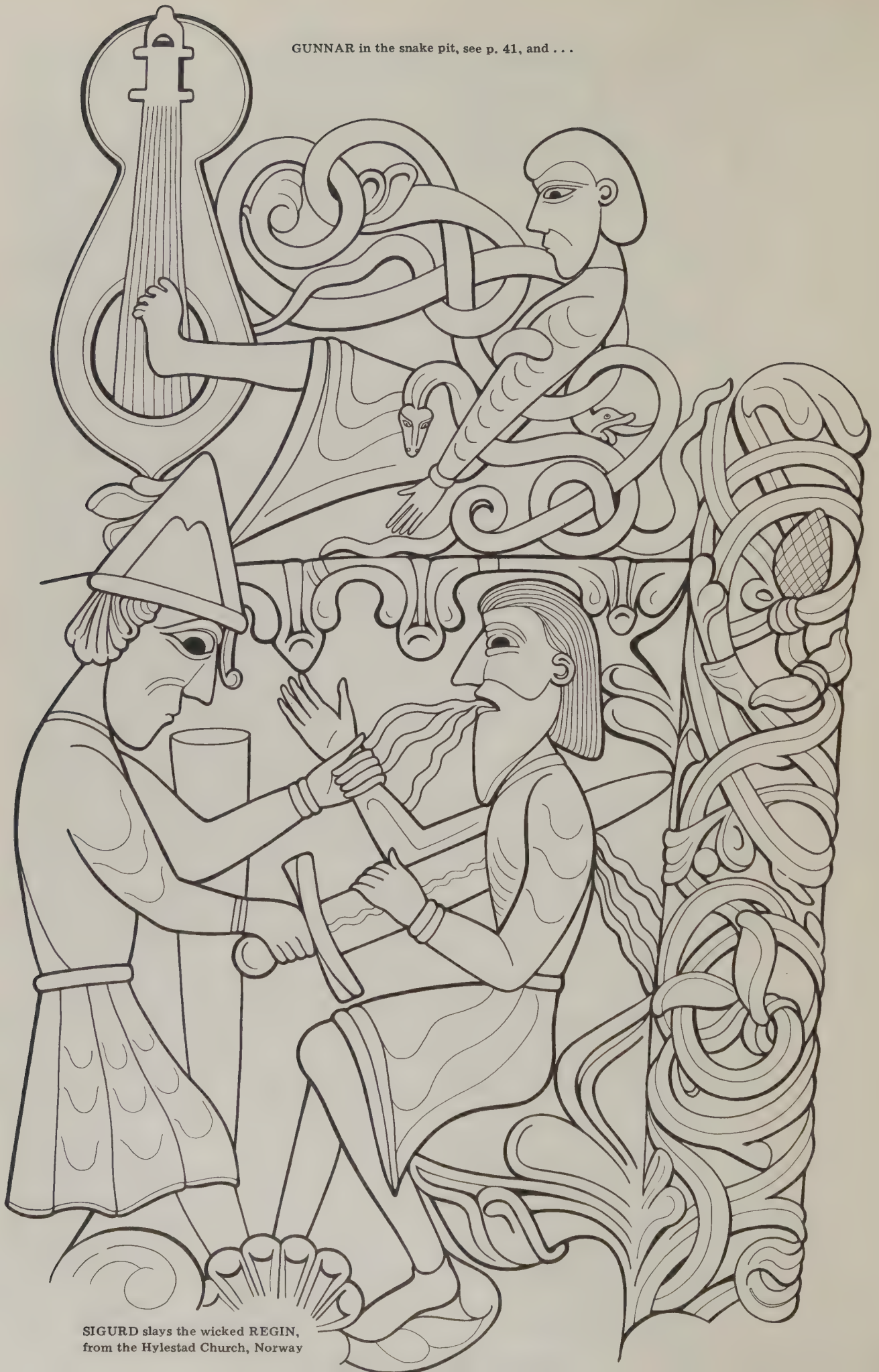
REGIN repairs the sword of
SIGURD'S father, from the
stave church at Hylestad,
Norway, 12th century





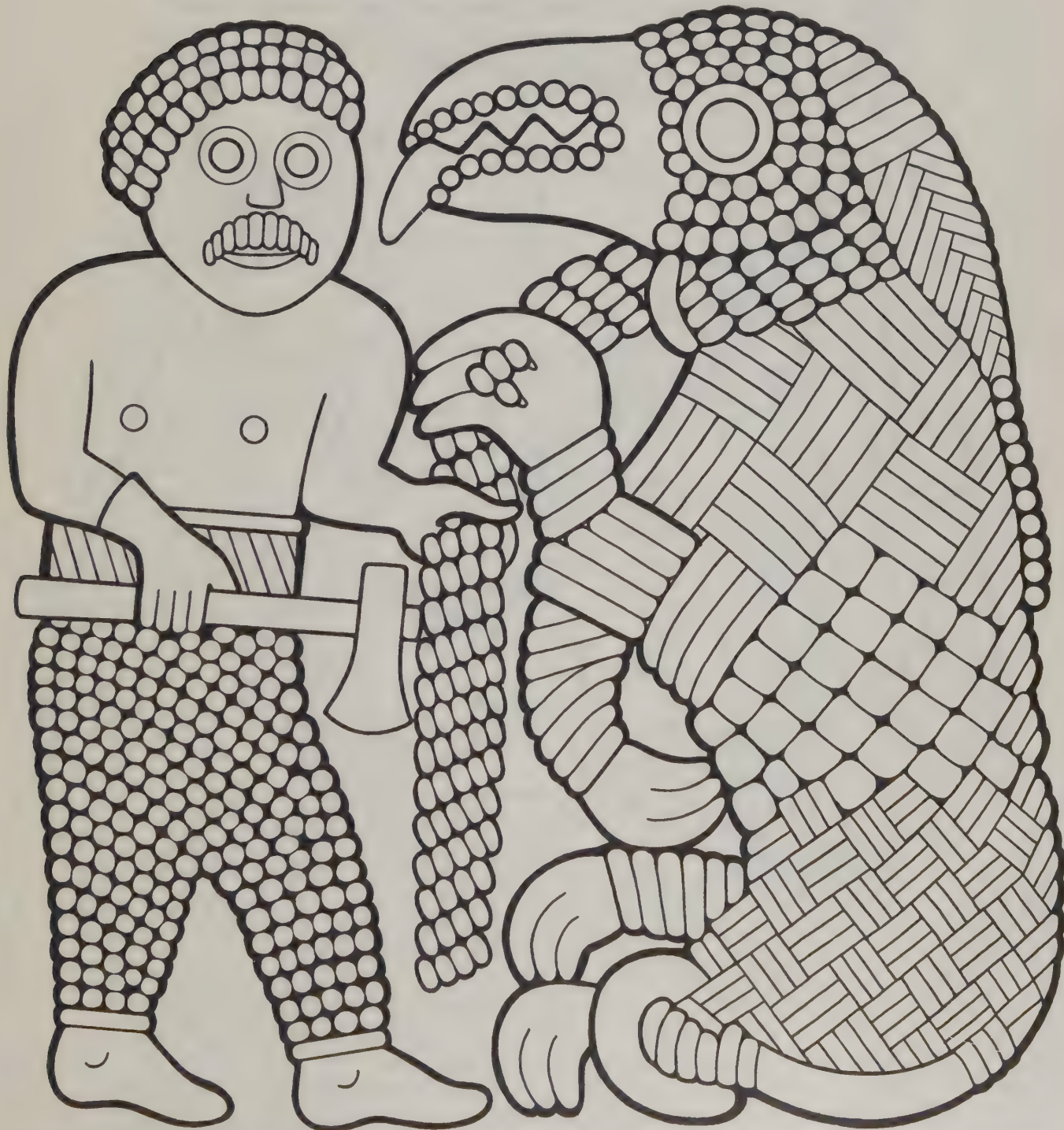
SIGURD cooks the dragon's heart, as REGIN sleeps; from the Hylestad Church, Norway





SIGURD slays the wicked REGIN,
from the Hylestad Church, Norway

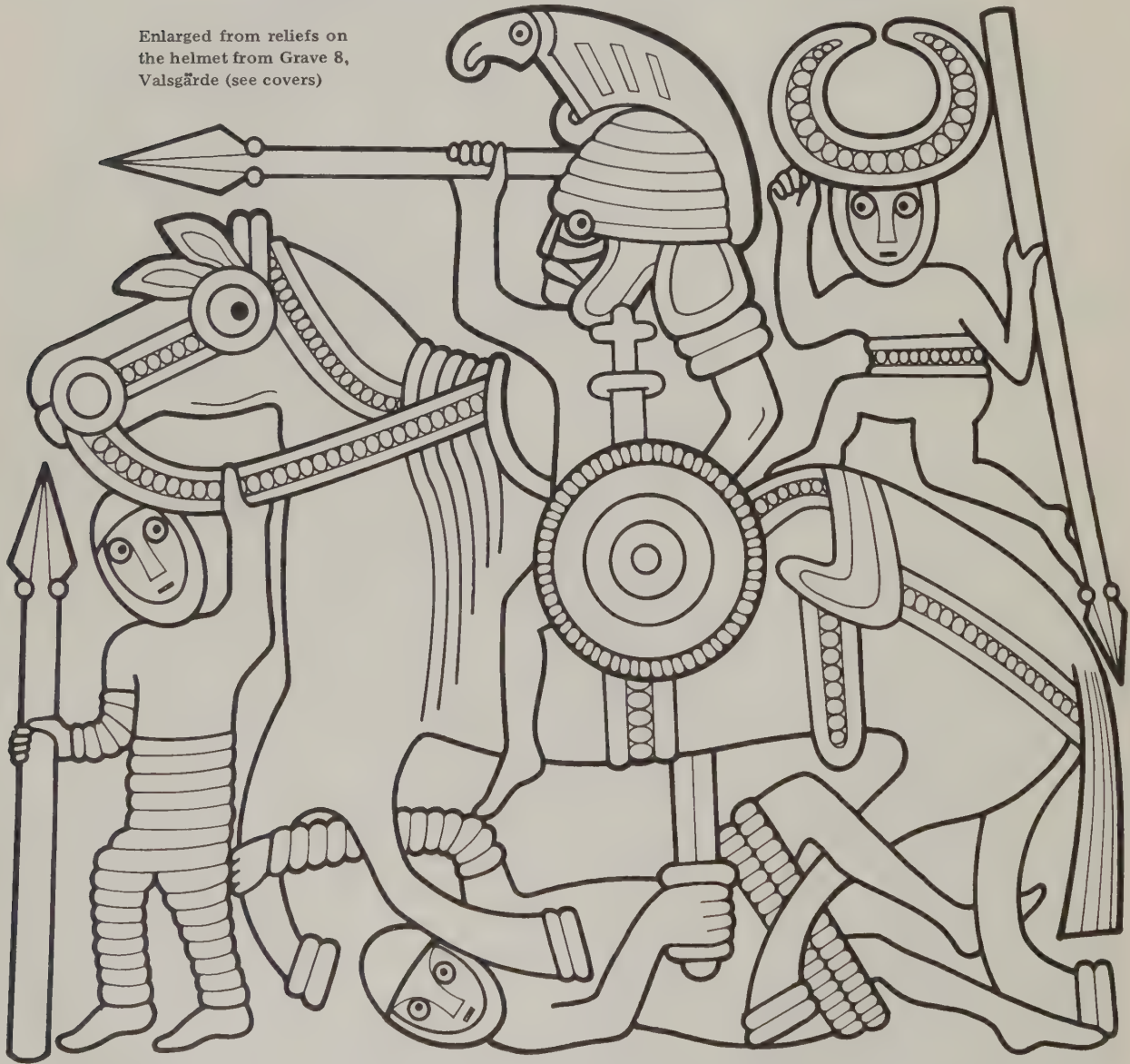
After Fafnir was dead, Sigurd returned to Regin, who had crept out of his hiding place. Regin ordered Sigurd to cook Fafnir's heart. After roasting the heart for a time on a spit, Sigurd touched it with his finger to see if it was done, and he burned his finger. He put his finger into his mouth, and in so doing he swallowed some of the dragon's heart-blood. Suddenly he could understand the speech of birds. All around him he heard the birds chattering. "There Sigurd sits," they sang, "roasting the heart of Fafnir. He should eat it himself. And there lies Regin, who would betray the one who trusts him. Sigurd should slice off Regin's head and have the gold all for himself. Having slain the one brother, he should never let the other go free." Sigurd now



understood Regin's designs and, following the counsel of the birds, he killed the treacherous Regin. He ate the dragon's heart and rode to his lair. There he filled chests with gold.

The birds had also advised him to ride on to the top of a mountain called Hindarfjall. When Sigurd arrived there, he found a steep cliff, topped with shields and as bright as if huge fires burned there and flames reached up to the sky. Passing behind the shields he found a woman asleep, clad in a warrior's coat of mail. Sigurd cut the mail and awoke the sleeping maiden. She was Brynhild, a Valkyrie placed there in punishment by Odin for choosing the wrong dead in a battle. Brynhild told much secret lore to Sigurd. Thereafter the two swore oaths, pledging themselves to one another. Then Sigurd rode on.

Enlarged from reliefs on
the helmet from Grave 8,
Valsgärde (see covers)



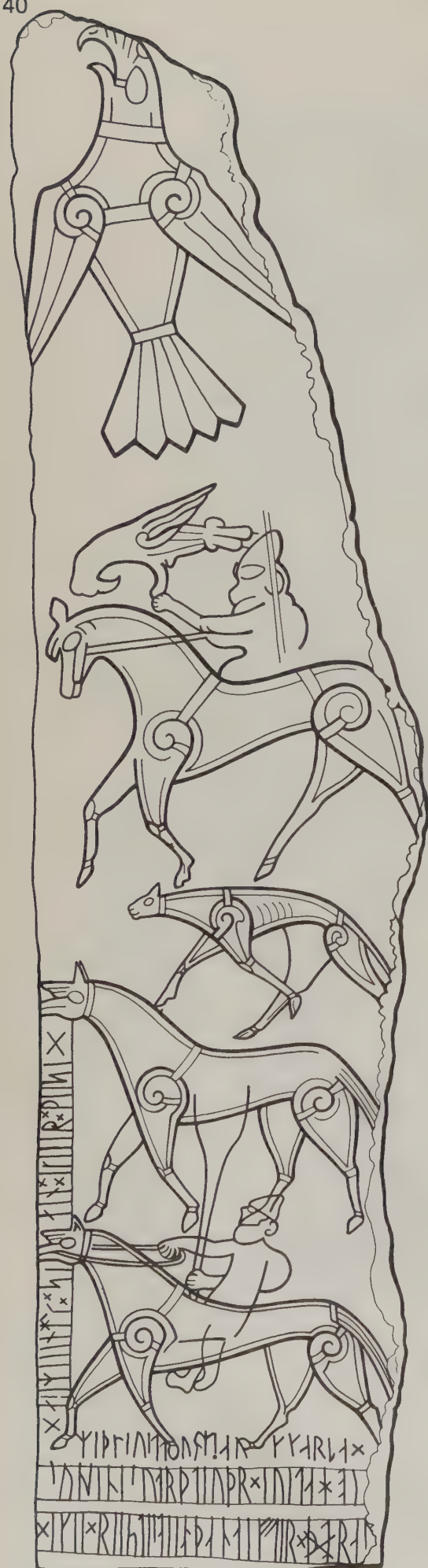
At length he came to the hall of King Gjuki, who ruled over the kingdom to the south of the Rhine. His wife was Grimhild the cruel; his sons were Gunnar, Hogni, and Gutthorm, and his daughter was Gudrun. Sigurd was handsomely received and stayed there for some time. One evening Grimhild put a potion in Sigurd's drink, so that he lost all memory of Brynhild. Instead he married Gudrun and swore blood brotherhood with her brothers.

Some time later Gunnar announced that he wished to woo Brynhild. Unmindful of his previous encounter with her, Sigurd agreed to help. When they came to her hall, Gunnar lacked the courage to ride through the flames. He and Sigurd changed shapes, and Sigurd rode into the hall and claimed Brynhild as Gunnar's wife. She was mystified, for only Sigurd would have the courage to ride through the flames—and yet here, seemingly, was Gunnar. He took from her Andvari's ring, which Sigurd had given her, and gave her another. After three days they returned to Gjuki's hall. Sigurd and Gunnar assumed their own shapes, and Gunnar and Brynhild were married.

The stage was now set for an enormous tragedy. Sigurd, the slayer of Fafnir and the greatest of heroes, had jilted a shield maiden. She was then forced to live with Sigurd's sworn brother and see Sigurd married to her own sister-in-law. Clearly no woman of Brynhild's mettle could stand for such a situation very long.



Dancing warriors as GUNNAR and SIGURD, enlarged from a piece of the helmet from Sutton Hoo; British Museum



The breaking point was reached when Gudrun and Brynhild quarreled over who was married to the greater man. Gudrun showed Brynhild Andvari's ring, which Sigurd had taken from Brynhild and given to her. Brynhild recognized the ring and turned pale as death. For seven nights she kept to her bed, until Sigurd came to ask what was wrong. She poured out all her bitterness and grief, wishing death on Sigurd, who had betrayed her. Her lamentations filled the hall.

From that point on, Brynhild egged on Gunnar to kill Sigurd. At first he and Hogni were reluctant to do the deed, but finally they decided to get their third brother, Gutthorm, to kill Sigurd. To build up Gutthorm's courage they fed him a potion of boiled snake and wolf's flesh, and desire for murder was kindled in him. Twice Gutthorm crept into Sigurd's room by night, but each time he was frightened away by Sigurd's fierce glaring eyes. The third time Sigurd was asleep, and Gutthorm thrust his sword deep into the sleeping hero. Mortally wounded, Sigurd awoke and threw his sword at the retreating Gutthorm. The sharp sword caught him and literally cut him in half. As Sigurd died, Gudrun, covered with his blood, exhaled a large sigh. At that Brynhild laughed aloud. She chose not to survive Sigurd, however, and was cremated with him on his funeral pyre.

Here ends the story of Sigurd the dragon-slayer, but the cycle of tales goes on. Gudrun was reconciled with her brothers by means of yet another drugged drink, administered by her mother, Grimhild. Grimhild then married Gudrun off to King Atli. Atli is the Scandinavian reflection of the historical figure Attila the Hun, who took tribute from the Roman Empire and overran much of Europe during the fifth century. In 437 the Huns slaughtered the kingdom of the Burgundians. This appears to be the historical origin of the story that follows, for the king of the Burgundians was Gundaharius, a name which would become Gunnar in the Scandinavian languages of the Middle Ages. Naturally, however, the stories were greatly changed during the eight centuries that passed before they were written down in Scandinavia. One example of such change is that Atli is sometimes made the brother of Brynhild. This would increase Gudrun's dislike for him and increase her desire to avenge herself on him.

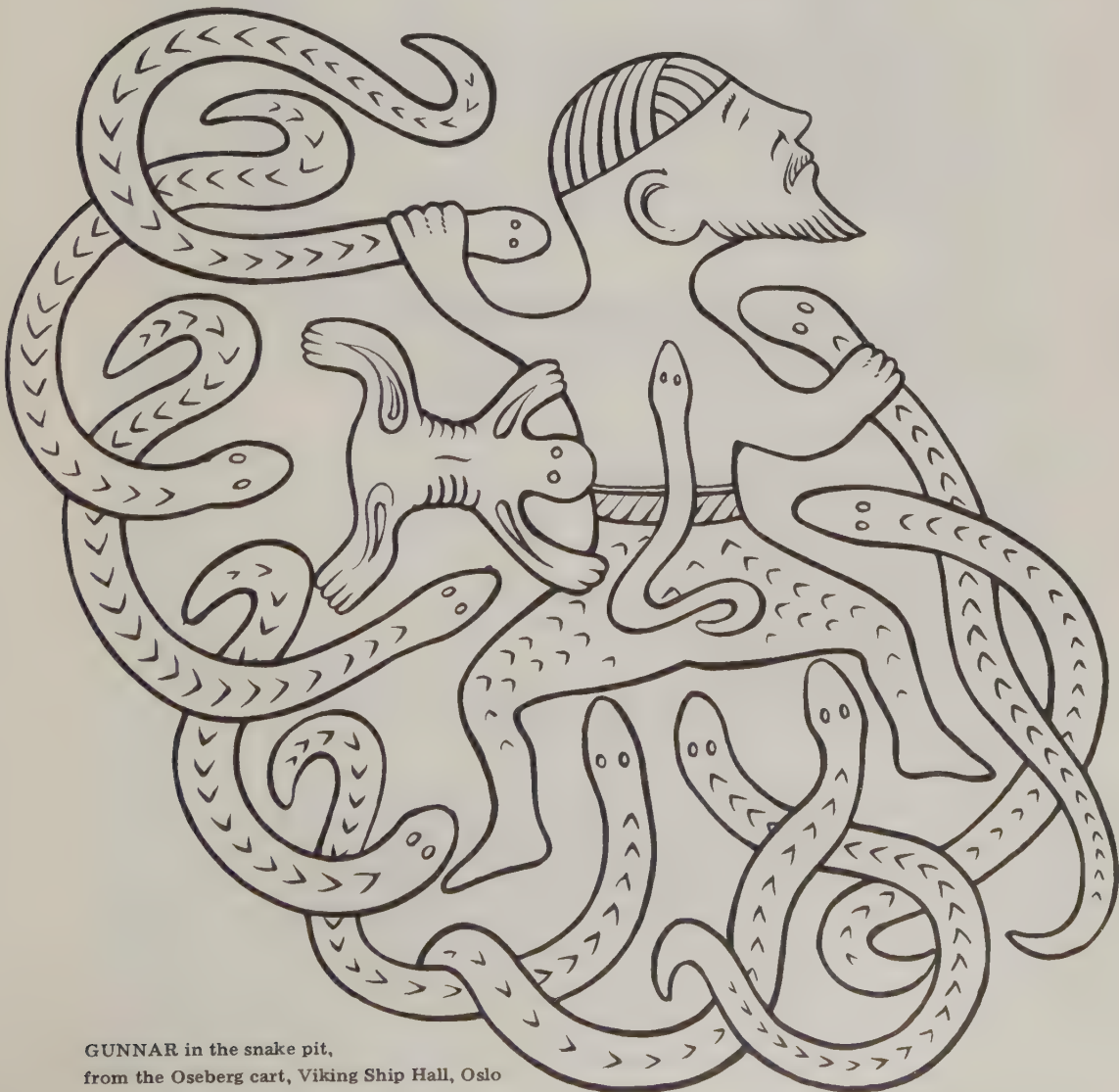
In any case, the stories have it that Atli invited Gunnar and Hogni to him. Gudrun suspected treachery and tried to warn them, but to no avail. Although Hogni was reluctant to accept Atli's invitation, the messenger was crafty, and finally Gunnar accepted. Gunnar and Hogni found the Huns ready for battle, and the end of it was that both brothers were taken captive. Gunnar was asked to reveal the whereabouts of the famous hoard of gold that Sigurd had won. Gunnar set one condition:

"The heart of Hogni shall lie in my hand,
bloody, cut from the breast of the bold one."

Instead, the Huns cut out the heart of a slave named Hjalli. When they brought it to Gunnar, he said:

Here lies the heart of Hjalli the faint-hearted,
unlike the heart of Hogni the bold;
fearfully it trembles as it lies on the tray.

This time the Huns did cut out the heart of Hogni, who was so bold he laughed scornfully as they did so. Now Gunnar was satisfied, for only he knew the location of the gold—and he would never reveal it. At this the Huns flung him into a snake-pit. It is said that he played a harp with his toes (his hands were bound) and charmed all the snakes but one. That one bit him, and there he died.



GUNNAR in the snake pit,
from the Oseberg cart, Viking Ship Hall, Oslo



GUNNAR in the snake pit again, a third of the way up; a stone from Klinte Hunninge (I), Gotland, Sweden



SVANHILD, top, sitting under a swan, behind Odin, from a stone in the *Statens Historiska Museum*

Gudrun's grisly career was not quite over, however. She tried to drown herself, but the waves carried her far off to the land of King Jonak. She married him and had three sons with him; their names were Sorli, Hamdir, and Erp. She had also had a daughter with Sigurd, a beautiful girl called Svanhild. She sent Svanhild off to be married to King Jormunrekk, but he had Svanhild put to death by being trampled and torn apart by wild horses. Gudrun set out to incite her sons to avenge their half-sister, and soon the three brothers were on their way to Jormunrekk's hall. Along the way the older brothers asked Erp how much he would help them. "As a hand helps a hand, or a foot a foot," he replied. Thinking the answer of little merit, Hamdir and Sorli killed Erp. Later one slipped and supported himself with his hand, and the other stumbled but kept his balance with one foot. Then they realized their mistake.

When they attacked Jormunrekk, Hamdir hacked off Jormunrekk's hands and Sorli his feet. Hamdir said:

The head would be off if Erp lived,
the courageous brother whom we killed on the way.

Hamdir and Sorli both fell in that battle.

Gudrun had now lost her husband, Sigurd, and her brothers. The time for revenge had come, and Gudrun proved herself the most cruel avenger in Norse legend. She killed the two little sons she had had with Atli and served them to him to eat. Then she scattered his treasure all about and set fire to the hall. Atli and all his men were burned to death.

It should be noted that Jormunrekk reflects the historical king Ermanaric of the Goths. He had a woman called Sunilda torn apart by wild horses. Her brothers, Sarus and Ammius, tried to avenge her. Ermanaric was maimed but not killed in their attack. Obviously this provided the historical kernel for the legends of Svanhild (Sunilda), Hamdir (Ammius) and Sorli (Sarus). In Scandinavia, however, the story was attached to the cycle of tales about Sigurd the dragon-slayer, providing the final part of that cycle.



VOLUND the smith, on the left, from an English casket made of whalebone; British Museum

Greed for gold, so important in the Sigurd cycle, seems also to have played a major role in the story of Wayland the Smith. He was known throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, and fine swords could be called "The work of Wayland." In Scandinavia he was called Volund, and it is from Scandinavia that the fullest accounts of his story come. Volund lived in a forest near a lake with his two brothers, Slagfinn and Egil. They were hunters. One day they saw three maidens near the lake, spinning flax. They were Valkyries who had put aside their swan-coats (which enabled them to fly). The three brothers married the three women. They dwelled there for nine years, but then their longing to travel returned, and the three women flew off again. Slagfinn and Egil set off to find their wives, but Volund stayed at home working as a smith, fashioning many beautiful objects. A certain King Nidud apparently coveted these, and he sent his men to capture Volund and bring the smith to him. To ensure that Volund would never escape, Nidud had the sinews in Volund's knees cut, and installed him in a smithy on an island called Saevarstad.

There Volund worked as Nidud's private craftsman, but all the time his thoughts were fastened on a grisly revenge. Only Nidud himself was to visit Volund on his island, but one day Nidud's two sons came there, curious about his gold. "Come back tomorrow and I will give you some," said Volund, "but don't tell anyone you are coming here." The next day the boys returned, eager for gold. Volund cut off their heads. He covered their skulls with silver and sent them as ornaments to Nidud. From their eyes he made gemstones for Nidud's wife, and from their teeth he made a necklace for Nidud's daughter, Bodvild. But still his revenge was not complete. Bodvild had been given a ring that Volund's swanmaiden wife had owned. When it broke, she dared tell none but Volund. He bade her come to him to get the ring repaired. When she did, he raped her. Now his revenge was complete. Volund gloated to King Nidud:



Go to the smithy which you made for me;
There you will find the bellows stained with blood;
I cut the heads off your little boys,
and hid their feet under the forge.
And their skulls, once covered with hair,
I covered with silver and sent to Nidud.
Out of their eyes I made gemstones,
and sent them to the wily wife of Nidud.



From a stone from Ardre (VIII), Gotland, Sweden

From the teeth of the two boys
 I made a necklace and sent it to Bodvild.
 And now Bodvild is to bear a child,
 the only daughter of you two.

Volund's brother Egil had shot many birds with his bow and arrow, and from the feathers Volund had made a feather-suit. Laughing scornfully he lifted into the air and flew away from the scene of his terrible revenge.

Three major themes typify these Norse heroic tales: greed, revenge, and battle. A story which emphasizes the importance of battle for its own sake tells of the eternal battle of the Hjadningar. They were the men of King Hedin, who carried out raids in the lands of a King Hogni (not the same as the Hogni in the Sigurd cycle). On one of these raids Hedin carried off Hogni's daughter, Hild-not, apparently, completely against her will. When her father learned that she had been taken, he followed her with his army to Hedin's realm. Hild met her father on the beach and asked him to make peace with Hedin, but he refused. Hild returned to Hedin and told him to prepare for battle. When the two armies took up their formation, Hedin again offered terms of peace to Hogni, who again refused. He had, he said, already drawn his sword Dainsleif. It was destined to kill a man each time it was drawn. A terrible battle then ensued. When night fell, however, Hild went around the battlefield awakening the dead by magic. The next day the kings took up the battle again, both at full strength. And so it continued. Each night the dead, along with their weapons and shields, were turned into small stones, but the next morning they arose and continued the battle. It was said that the battle of the Hjaoningar would last until Ragnarok.

The concept is similar to that of Odin's dead warriors in Valholl, who slay one another by day and party together by night. It is an interesting conception of the importance of battle in a man's life. So important is it, in fact, that it continues into a warrior's afterlife.

This coincides with two famous stanzas from a poem called "Words of the High One" (the "high one" is Odin). They tell of the importance of fighting bravely to the end, for only one's fame will live on:



Valsgärde 5

Cattle die, kinsmen die,
 One dies oneself in the same way;
 But his glory never dies,
 For the man who wins it well.
 Cattle die, kinsmen die,
 One dies oneself in the same way;
 One thing I know that never dies:
 The reputation of each dead man.

That such sentiment probably related to the lives of real men is perhaps indicated by the texts of many inscriptions carved into stones during the Viking period. The carvers used the runic alphabet, which according to myth was obtained by Odin when he was hung for nine nights on the windswept tree. Of these many inscriptions one may be cited. It stands in Gripsholm,

near Stockholm in central Sweden, and was carved during the early part of the eleventh century. The expedition it refers to was undertaken by a certain Ingvar. This expedition, undertaken no doubt in search of trade or plunder, ended disastrously; all of its members died far from home, in the land of the Bagdad caliphate. The Gripsholm stone is a memorial to one member of the expedition. It reads:

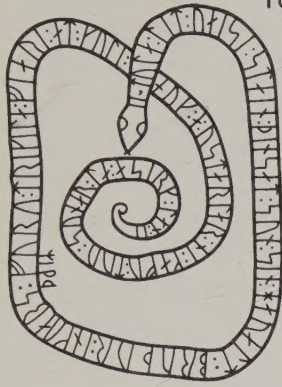
Tola erected this stone in memory of her son Harald, the brother of Ingvar.

They travelled boldly in search of gold and to the east they fed the eagle.

They died to the south in the land of the Saracens.

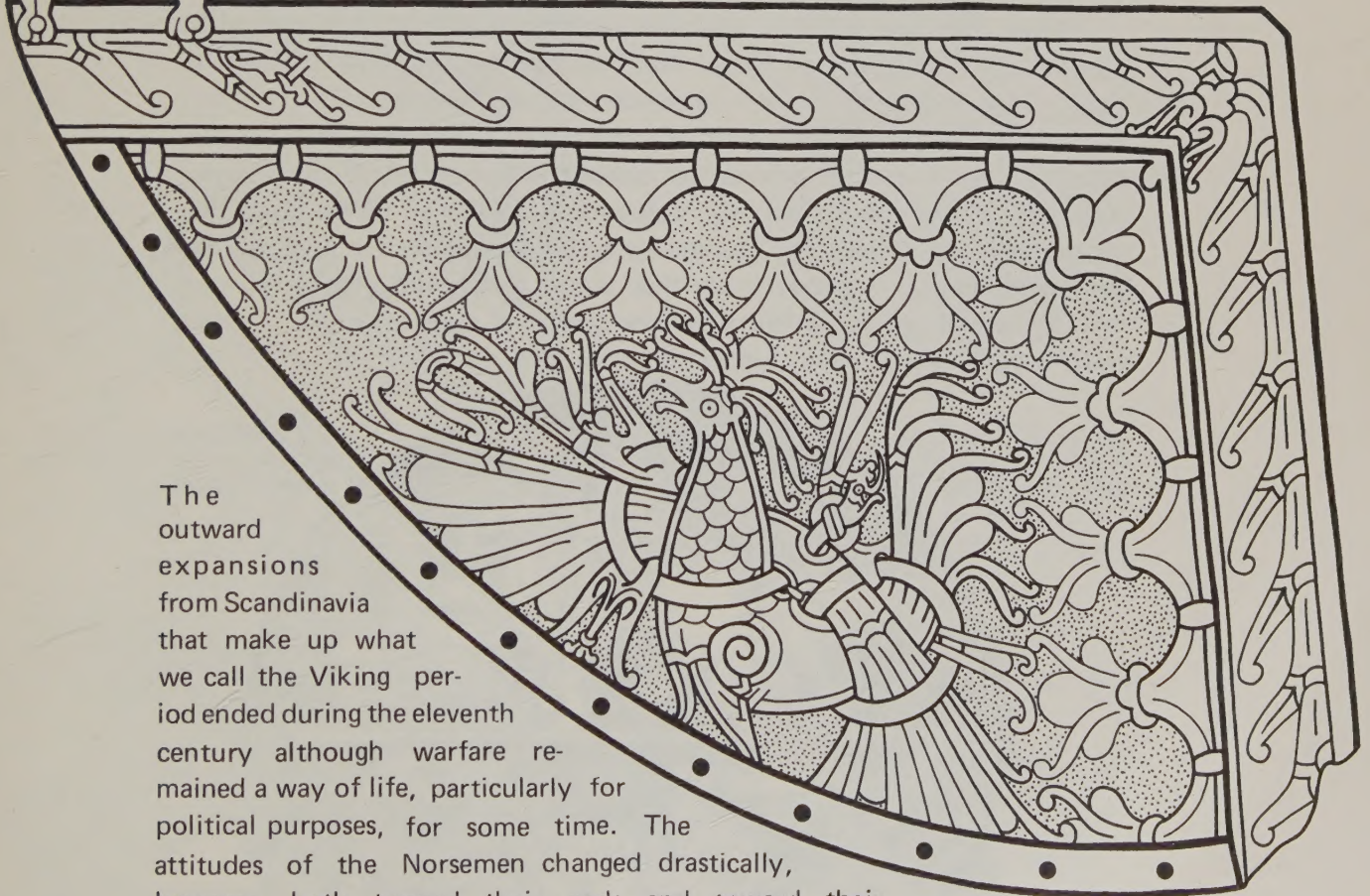
("They fed the eagle" means they killed men in battle; eagles and vultures would then feed on the corpses.)

This Harald's fame really did live, as the stone may be seen to this day.



An eagle, below, from the weather vane from Heggen, Modum, Norway; *Universitetets Oldsaksamlin, Oslo*

The outward expansions from Scandinavia that make up what we call the Viking period ended during the eleventh century although warfare remained a way of life, particularly for political purposes, for some time. The attitudes of the Norsemen changed drastically, however, both toward their gods and toward their heroic ideals. What changed them was the coming of Christianity in the late tenth century and its gradual acceptance throughout the eleventh. The greatest missionary kings were probably the two Olafs in Norway. Olaf Tryggvason attempted to unite all Norway under Christianity during the last years of the



tenth century, and Olaf Haraldson became the great Norwegian patron saint; he was killed in battle in 1031 and declared a saint not many years later.

The most remarkable conversion to Christianity, however, took place in Iceland. Missionaries, many sent by Olaf Tryggvason, had converted some but not all of the population. The Christians and the worshippers of Odin and Thor were at odds, and it looked as though fighting might erupt at the national assembly held during the year 1000. The issue was put to the law-speaker, a pagan named Thorgeir. Thorgeir went and lay down. He covered himself with his cloak and spoke not a word. The day passed and all the night. The next morning he sat up and went out to speak. There should, he said, be only one set of laws in the country, not a separate set for pagans and for Christians. In Norway and Denmark kings had led battles over the issue. War could only devastate the country. "And now it is my advice," he said, "that we not let those men decide, who most wish to go against each other. Let us mediate the case between them, so that each may keep a certain part of his demands. But let us have one law and one faith. It will certainly happen, that if we tear up the law we will tear up the peace." His decision, he continued, was to adopt Christianity, allowing pagan worship only in private. A few years later such worship was prohibited, and Iceland has been a Christian nation ever since.

More than two centuries after this conversion, learned Christians wrote down the tales of gods and heroes that had been handed down to them by their Viking ancestors. The Viking period had long been over, but its tales—of hatred between gods and giants, of greed, battle and revenge among men—had lived on. For they express the courage and spirit of all men against great odds. None was perfect, but Volund was untouched by the greed that surrounded him, Sigurd and Gunnar by greed and desires for revenge. The gods were flawed, and they knew they would perish; but they knew, too, that the giants would perish. After the gods had given their all, a better world would follow. That is courage at its best.

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From a church door from Iceland, c. 1200; Reykjavik





Enlarged from the Valsgärde 5 helmet (see back cover)

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This is an enlarged detail from the helmet on the front cover, which was discovered in 1936, when boat-grave 8 at Valsgärde, in Sweden, was excavated. Stave armor was also found in the grave, from two different suits, attached to chainmail. This seventh century helmet is perhaps the most complete one yet found in any of the Scandinavian graves. If you would



like such a helmet, you can have one magnificently reconstructed from pieces found in Grave 5, Valsgärde, together with three other rare helmets, printed in golds and silvers, ready to cut out and wear, for just \$3.95 at your store or add 60c for shipping and write BELLEROPHON BOOKS, 36 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101